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**MODERNISM IN RELIGION**

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FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY IN RELIGION

STUDIES IN HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

THE ETHICS OF HEGEL

THE FREEDOM OF AUTHORITY

# Modernism in Religion



BY

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New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1922

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Set up and printed. Published April, 1922.

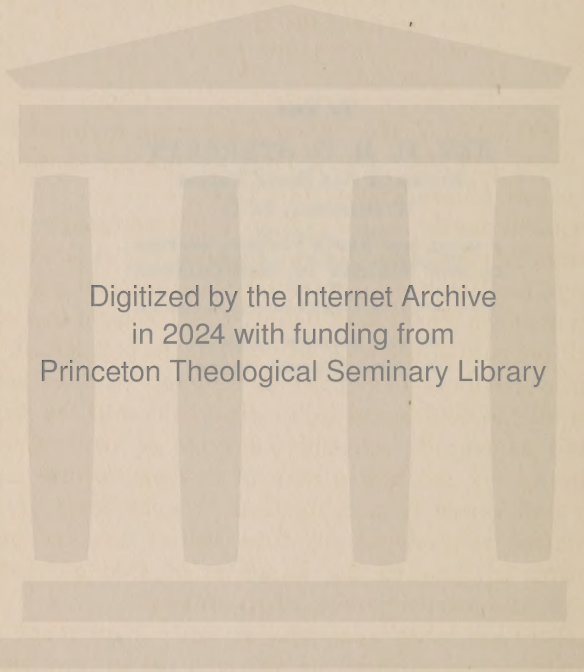
Press of  
J. J. Little & Ives Company  
New York, U. S. A.



TO THE  
REV. H. H. D. STERRETT  
RECTOR OF ALL SOULS' PARISH  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

A LOYAL SON AND A YOUNGER BROTHER  
IN THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

AND  
TO THE DEVOTED MEMBERS  
OF OUR COMMON FLOCK



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## PREFACE

“Work of his hand  
He nor commends, nor grieves—  
Pleads for itself the fact;  
As unrepenting nature leaves  
Her every act.”

**P**ERSONALLY these lines of Emerson would suffice for a preface. But I have to consider those for whom I have written this book.

I hesitated much before giving it the personal touch. I overcame this hesitation for two reasons: (1) it is largely a personal confession of a spiritual pilgrimage to a haven that is not storm tossed with doubt; (2) I believe that the practical purpose of the book will thereby be best served.

I am a convinced modernist in religion. I have been through all the doubts and difficulties that assail the modern mind as regards conventional types of institutional Christianity. I see how a man of modern culture may frankly and earnestly worship God in some form of an authoritative religion—in any form rather than in none, if he cares to forward the Kingdom of God on earth, which was the master passion of the Master.

But there are multitudes who do not. Very many of the university and college-bred men and women are floundering in a state of doubt raised by the results of the new learning and the twentieth century world-view. This has brought them to the stage of enlightenment as regards conventional forms. Too often it leaves them in the stage of clearing these out, and without that appreciative his-

torical spirit that might enable them to make a synthesis between the new and the old. I have written chiefly with such in mind, both those who are alienated from any church and those who are silently protesting conformists within one. The alienation of the laboring class from the church is much greater in this country though less than in England. I regret that I am not fitted to deal with this more vital question. That class flocked about Jesus and had the Gospel preached to it. It does not flock to our churches, or even to the fine chapels built to segregate it from the churches of the other classes.

A year ago I preached a sermon on the text, "Sir, we would see Jesus," touching on the protean forms of Jesus as seen by the Evangelists, the Epistolists, the early Fathers and those of medieval and Reformation times. Some wanted me to publish it. Nay, I said, I would sooner write a book and that I would never do again. Then many old intellectual and religious friends urged the task upon me. They argued that my ten years work as a professor of ethics and Christian evidences in a theological seminary, and my seventeen years of university work as a professor of philosophy had given me some fitness to do just this work. Finally it got on my conscience. On Sunday, October 15th, the tenth anniversary of the founding of All Souls' parish, I said a temporary *vale* to active parish work for three months while I wrote the book. Ten years before I had locked the door of my study, buried my manuscripts and opened the door of my closet for preparation for the active work of the ministry again, a work which has been such a blessed and soul-saving work for me. But now I should follow the dictate of conscience and unlock the door of my study, or rather take a bit of it into the closet and there make another book. So I "Cast the bantling on the rocks."



I am a convinced modernist. But I am still incurably religious. I meet many cultured people who are likewise so. But they do not find how they can nourish their religion in what seems to them to be outworn forms, what though the

“Hound of Heaven still follows with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy.”

These people need help.

But they are also incurably intellectual. So am I. I live as an heir of the intellectual fruitage of many ages. We all live in the intellectual atmosphere of the twentieth century. We accept the twentieth century world-view, enriched by those of other ages. We see with twentieth century eyes and only somewhat darkly with the eyes of other centuries. Some are tempted to cast into the sea all the older visions of the Christ and dogmas about him—as obsolete for them, as is nearly the whole of the old *materia medica* to the modern physician. That they may well cast into the sea and, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “Be none the worse off; only it might be worse for the fishes.”

But we cannot do this with the *materia medica* for souls. At our peril only could we do so foolish a thing. This would be as foolish as for one to unhouse himself before a new house was ready; or to cut the umbilical cord that binds to some mother church; or to attempt to form a new church and creed and cult, which would soon have all the faults of the old one. We should be thankful heirs of all the ages before we can be the slaves of none. God *here* and *now* for us, largely because of God *there* and *then*. Praisers of the present, we should be at least sympathetic appraisers of the past, though never mere *lauda-*

*tores temporis acti.* We must build on the old Gospel foundations and largely with the materials of past ages. We must have the historical spirit, and the sense of the organic continuity of developing institutions as forms of nurturing and propagating the idea, the kernel which the husks enshrine. This we shall see characterized the late modernists in the Church of Rome, as it now does those in the Church of England.

Modernists are not destructive critics. They aim at the adaptation of the old to the modern religious needs. The old has always grown. But it grows too slowly now. It has always been so. Institutions are always, and that rightly, conservative. Radicalism without something conserved is vain and destructive. The mere twentieth century man is as provincial as a mere tenth or sixteenth century man. A matricide is fully as unholy as the conservative Herods and rulers of the Jews. Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfil.

But honest criticism of the ways of mother church is not matricidal. To recur to the personal note: As professor of apologetics, I began very much as Tyrrell says he did—as a conservative, battling fiercely against all attacks on the present forms of Christianity. I slaughtered Strauss and Renan and the exponents of the higher criticism. When I got through, I found that I had learned much from the enemy. *Fas est ab hoste doceri.* I found that my fight with them all was vitiated by special pleading, that blurs honest vision. I was ready to exclaim with Coleridge, “. . . evidences of Christianity, I am weary of the word.” Apologetics on the old lines of proof from prophecy and miracle, like that of the hard church type of “believe or be damned,” came to seem like an impertinence. The whole subject needed a new orientation, which would include all that one learned from honest

critics and opponents. At all the old evidences of Christianity the cultured man of to-day shrugs his mind into an interrogation point. The whole thing must be evaluated differently, if not within the church then—and woe to the church if it comes to this—without.

Well, we are asked what are modernists going to do about it? What is their base line? Their base line is that of the necessity and value of the church. Their aim is to help modernists who are within and the many who now are outside the church, and also to help the church to help them. They are aiming to get a *modus vivendi*, or, rather an *entente cordiale*, not merely a diplomatic but a vital one between the old church and modernists who are honestly compelled to accept the results of modern critical study of Christian history and the Bible.

I write as a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church, thankful and appreciative of her as the best mother for me—as long as she remains a Protestant Church and does not yield official authority into the hands of quite a large and much protesting body of Romanizers now in her fold. They protest that she is the Catholic Church of America and are laboring thus to change her title. A short time ago one of these clerical brethren approached me on the golf links and said, “You are a priest of the Church, are you not?” “No,” I said. Shortly I added, “I am a presbyter of the Protestant Episcopal Church.” I meant that I was not a priest in his sense of the term (*sacerdos*) but a priest in the Prayer Book sense of the term, where priest is but presbyter writ short. I sometimes thank God that I was born and bred, till early manhood, in the Presbyterian Church. I think that apart from the devout religious training it gave me, it has, throughout my fifty years’ service in the ministry of our church, saved me from a too provincial attitude towards

other churches. There is often a certain sort of condescension in our attitude towards our sister churches, which the late Bishop Greer characterized as "Snobbishness derived from the attitude of the Anglican church to all non-conformist churches." That was the attitude of Anglicans here in colonial days. In reporting to the Home Board in England, they wrote: "We are all good churchmen here; we maintain an *offensive* attitude towards them that are without." Such an attitude now, I fancy, is taken as amusing rather than offensive by those without. It took our church much time to overcome the bane of ecclesiastical torism.

I love the Episcopal Church for reasons too numerous to mention and could not easily feel at home elsewhere. I would do but little for the self-aggrandizement of the *official* part of any church. I do not like ecclesiasticism. On intellectual and ethical grounds I am a Christian mystic, upon whom rest lightly many old forms that trouble others. The Episcopal Church has been stigmatized as the *easiest* sort of a church; as not troubling one much with either politics or religion. That is a base slander, at least as regards religion. It has been called the *roomiest* sort of a church. It holds many men of many minds, with parties enough to form three or four churches: a party that teaches and practices Romanism, *minus* only the Pope; and a party that is Protestant to the core; and a school, rather than an organized party, known as the Broad church school. That is her glory, so long as she can hold them all together without yielding complete dominance to any one of them. Perhaps it was because I saw it to be the roomiest church that I entered its ministry fifty years ago. It affords freedom within elastic bounds. It affords freedom from many bonds. If some are strangling in their own folds, I could frankly say, Come in, if you really think



that you could do better service for the Master and his Kingdom. But if you look at it as the *easiest*, then, pray God, *stay out*. We have already our full share of idlers.

An apology is due for my frequent reference to the Episcopal Church. I know more about her than I do about her sister Protestant churches. I am keenly interested in keeping her Protestant, till she can take another step forward and become The Modernist Episcopal Church, instead of crabbing backward to Rome.

Besides being an appeal to modernists this book is meant to be an appeal to all the churches to recognize, retain and seek to gain modernists; to give them a welcome as a much needed dynamic element in their own ultra-conservative life, where mere traditionalism is a drag on vitality and progress.

J. MACBRIDE STERRETT.

JANUARY 13TH, 1922.



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\* *Modernism in the Churches in America*: See Appendix.





A Christian modernist is one who is a thankful heir of all the Christian ages, but feels that he should not be the slave of any one of them.

“By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.”—*Erasmus*.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”

—*Tennyson*.



# MODERNISM IN RELIGION

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

THE term modernist may seem to be rather arrogant. It was at first used by some Jesuits as a term of reproach and later adopted by Pope Pius X, who defined modernism as "the synthesis of all heresies," and "the adversary of the church." However, the term Modernist is a good one to apply to men of modern culture, embracing, as it does, a knowledge and an appreciation of the cultures of other ages and religions. For the modernism of which we speak is distinctively a *religious* movement. On its intellectual side it is an attempt at a synthesis between the new learning and the old religion. Of course there are modernists who are not religious and who have little knowledge or appreciation of the culture of other ages. They are merely twentieth century men, with undue emphasis upon scientific knowledge. They live and think in a shut-in valley, ignorant that beyond the enclosing mountains of the twentieth century, there are other valleys and other ages and men. "*Hinter dem Berge sind auch Leute.*" But they are not embraced in the term modernism, as it has become technically applied to a religious movement.

Modernists hold no brief for the superiority of merely twentieth century culture. Praisers of the present age

are apt to be just as purblind as praisers of the past. No more is something good or true because it is new, than that something is old and therefore neither good nor true. The old and new form an organic process. Modernists do not propose to set up any one stage of this process as being true, when taken out of its connection with the others. They grant that in many ways the merely modern age is not as good as some ages past. Whether men of this age are morally, intellectually, religiously, esthetically or even economically better than those of some other ages is an open question. Who would not sooner be a citizen of an old Greek city with good laws, than to be one of many of our modern ring-ruled cities? Who would not prefer dwelling where he could look on works of classic art; sit in the Academy and listen to Plato; see the Greek plays and read the Greek poets; be a Greek cosmopolite, while also a country gentleman attending to his neighboring farms, and having about him men and women of culture, the latter clad simply but elegantly in flowing robes. What person of culture would not sooner dwell there than in the rush and whirl of a modern city with its jazz and scanty garb; with its vulgarities of architecture, and some other arts?

Because we have such a heap of knowledge is no proof that we are more intellectual than the Greeks of old. Because we can travel eighty miles an hour by train, or two hundred miles by aeroplane, or, as most do in our cities, forty miles an hour in frightful subways, is no proof that we are living well, or even as well as some of other ages. With all our gains we suffer many losses. Emerson has put it all in a simile. We have invented the carriage, but have lost the use of our limbs. However, every epochal age has its modern spirit, its *Zeitgeist*, and its modern world-view, destined, in turn, to become a traditional one. The *Zeitgeist* of any isolated age is only temporary, but

there are certain dominant ideas in every such age, which become a sort of framework in which all experience is set and which furnish the modern dialect in which it is expressed. These ideas form an enswathing atmosphere, which affects not only scholars but also the general public. The pessimistic Dean of St. Paul's says that "the myth of Progress is our form of apocalypticism," that is that the golden age is at hand. But if we rightly define progress as the process through which any organic thing advances from a less to a more completed state of itself; realizing more fully its real nature, as Aristotle would say—as the acorn does in its growth into the oak—then we must admit that Progress is a wise conception for us to use in the study of any history. It will not always prove that the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns. Neither does it lead us to doubt that "through the ages one increasing purpose runs." Pessimism dethrones God. Fate or chance or the whirl of blind atoms in mechanical dance ascends the throne. What is a safe judgment as to man under the category of Progress? Has he not progressed from the conditions of his ancestor, the Pithecanthropos of the glacial period, and then in the more general progress of the race. Man has, at least, dropped the *Pithec*, with which he was hyphenated many thousand years ago. Progress stands as a good modern term. It takes a long look over a very large historical map to see the general progress of mankind. Periods of decline, of reversion to lower types, of deformations and rottenness are a part of the whole process. The pessimist fixes his gaze on these and says "no progress." So too the kindred conception of Evolution is worth while using along with the modern conception of the unity and order of nature; so too the conception of the Divine immanence in the fields of nature and man. Then there is the modern conception of Relativity in two senses, (1) that of the relativity of any



institution to the needs of the different ages through which it persists and (2) as being relative at any time, to the whole process, forbidding the identification of any one stage with the ultimate form. Then in the study of institutions and literatures there is what is known as the Historical method. Put yourself as far as you can at the point of view of those in any age that you are studying. See as far as possible with their eyes; get their general world-view. How did any institution or any body of laws or doctrines come about? What was the character, time, place and needs of the situation? And what did they mean to those who formulated and to those who accepted them? Their past forms are to be estimated by their contemporary situations and problems. Their solutions are to be recognized as upon the whole the best they could make and the best for their times. The historical spirit is the heart of this method. See old forms of institutions, creeds, laws, as men of those ages saw them. Banish the spirit of envy and pride, appreciate their work and their vision. This spirit does not live in the blindly conservative mind. An English clergyman being asked his opinion of the Salvation Army replied: "Could any one imagine the Apostles as officers in such a remarkable organization?" To this it was aptly replied that one could as easily imagine the Apostles toiling in the slums of London as he could imagine them as Archbishops with their five and twenty thousand pounds a year, their palaces, and their seats in the House of Lords. The historic sense enables one to imagine both of these positions.

There is the broader, more divine conception of God's revelation in the past to children of all ages and climes that has come with a large and free study of other religions. There is the broadening knowledge of the complexity and greatness of the human soul reached by the New

Psychology. Then there are the inductive and the pragmatic methods—the one of them as reaching, and the other as holding to certain positions. Whether the best methods or not, they are methods that men are using in place of the *a-priori* method. Of all these dominant modern conceptions, I venture to say a few words on the conception of the Divine immanence. That is an heritage from the Greek Fathers of the early church. They identified the Jewish Messiah with the Greek *Logos*. It nearly all began with the Gospel of St. John. “In the beginning was the word” (*Logos*). All things were made by Him. They conceived the *Logos* as not only in man, but in all nature giving it unity, order and purpose. In spite of the over-emphasis placed upon God’s transcendence in the theology of Augustine, Aquinas and Calvin, there ever continued with some Christian thinkers the conception of the divine immanence. One throws off the intolerable nightmare, the incubus of the long regnant Augustinianism, when he uses the conception of the Divine immanence. It transforms all of one’s theology. Really the two conceptions are but the two halves of one conception, divorced only in man’s thoughts; two halves of one transcending whole. Transcendency has been so over emphasized as to exclude God from his creation, except by miraculous interference with its laws. It leaves one with an absentee Almighty on his throne in heaven. Immanency also has been so over emphasized as to confine Him within nature. But it is chiefly in nature that this conception is being used to-day. As men of science discover laws in nature, we say that they are reading God’s thoughts after Him. There is no chance in nature. The question of interest here concerns the relation of these two conceptions. They are of the *same* nature and substance. God above does not work at cross purposes with God below. There is no need to resort to any vulgar

sort of wonders to prove His continuous presence and activity. The supernatural is present in the natural. There is no need to fear. Come what may in nature's way, if not interfered with by ignorant or wicked men, one will fear no evil, even when he walks through the valley of the shadow of death. Always the everlasting, the ever-present arms are underneath. God is immanent also in the experience of man, in all human history, in all institutions for man's uplift—the same God who is also above. That is the way that modernists conceive of nature, and of man in his ascent out from and above physical nature. Then as to the conceptions of progress in history: periods of decline and of rottenness; of stagnation and inefficiency; of degeneracy and decay are clearly seen in the history of all human institutions.

One would fain read the history of the church as one of continuous development from its fontal origin, rather than one of continuous perversion from its type. The latter is the way that Harnack and Sabatier and Francis A. Henry<sup>1</sup> seem to read it. They voice the crab cry, back to the primitive church. But we cannot thus de-modernize ourselves or the church. Back to Jesus, the font, the principle of our religion, we must surely go for inspiration and fruitfulness of our religious life. That is our primal religious heritage. That is the type with which we must always test any stage of the religious life. But backward in polity, creed and cult we should not go. These are his-

<sup>1</sup>I am in hearty sympathy with all these writers so far as they insist on going back to Jesus as the fountain of life. But I cannot understand how it is possible to discard all the historical developments of Christianity in the lines of polity, doctrine and cult. The volume by Francis A. Henry on "Jesus and the Christian Religion," really gets at the heart of the matter. But in considering Christianity as a *way of life*—as Jesus' way of life—he takes rather a pessimistic view of the historical developments of Christianity, as upon the whole, being perversions.

torical acquisitions. These are the preservative husks for the kernel. All that we can do is to see if they are functioning well, at any given time. The kernel could not survive without its incarnation, its embodiment in form of an organization. It, of course, is the vital thing. Back to Jesus for the kernel, then through the Christian centuries for the necessary serving and propagating husk of embodiment. That is the way we read the history of Christianity. And when we do so, we shall not be pessimistic though our optimism may be greatly chastened. Progress is so slow.

“The mills of God grind slowly,  
Yet they grind exceeding small.”

Biologists, starting with a life-cell, trace its growth through the two factors of heredity and environment. Take the church of to-day with its past heritage in its twentieth century environment. Environment is that in which it lives in any age. And this, or rather adaptation to it, makes for growth. The church primarily adapted herself to its Jewish environment, though only for a short time. Then it adapted itself to its environment of Greek thought and culture; then to that of the Roman world; and then to that of Reformation times, and thus kept a living and a fruitful organism. If this age is really an epochal one, it is a fair question to ask how the church is adapting herself to the present environment. That it must do in order to continue a living, ministrant church to people of this age. Environment sustains when the organism is adapted to it. And this means change and greater efficiency in the heritage. And it is not a question of any merely mechanical adaptation. It is that of self-adaptation.



I need not raise the question: "What is the matter with the church to-day?" That has been raised long and widely and loudly. The press for the last five years has been prolific of books and articles on this topic. "What must the church do to be saved?" is the title of one book—saved, or so saved, I take it, as to make it a more efficient power for saving souls and for advancing God's Kingdom on earth. "Can the church survive the changing order?" is the title of another volume. "Shall we stand by the church?" "What is the matter with the church?" "Why has Christianity failed?" These are the titles of other volumes.

The title of another volume by a clergyman of the Episcopal church—the Rev. Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin—is "The Church Enchained." It is a passionate appeal to the church to unloose the chains now binding the Christ within her—chains forged by logic; chains of narrow definitions and of exalted pride and ecclesiasticism; iron chains of bigotry and golden chains of luxury. Such an enchained church is a church impotent. "The term churchman is not always the synonym of Christian. The church may be writ large, and the Christ be but faintly inscribed in the heart."

Read the most piteous cry in the volume entitled "The Church in the Furnace," by seventeen church chaplains in the late war. Of this I speak further on. The prevailing cry of all these voices is, not that Christianity has failed, but that the church, as the chief propagandist of the Gospel of Jesus, has failed. Her failure has come largely from her swathing herself in the outgrown wrappings of ecclesiastical traditions which are obsolete for the modern mind. She has failed also to meet the needs of less educated people. What a great work is to be done here to enable her to be their helper and leader. It is a far

more important need than that of her meeting the religious needs of the more educated moderns. The late Bishop Franklin S. Spaulding published a sermon on the need of "Christianizing the Church" on this social and economic side. He was a fiery prophet of economic righteousness. Few can forget his red-hot message at the time of the meeting of the *General Convention* in 1914. "We come to a *General Convention* of Capitalists. \* \* \* The church, if she is to be a real power in the twentieth century, must cease to be merely the almoner of the rich and become the champion of the poor."

Too early returned to heaven, a like mantle is still worn by another fiery prophet, the present Bishop of Michigan, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Charles D. Williams, president of the Church League for Industrial Democracy. God bless his work. I only wish that I were fitted to take part in it. But the Christianizing of the church so as to make her ministrant to the religious life of the smaller class of well educated people is also imperative. These people are saying things like the following: "Dogmas that are obsolete and no longer nourishing"; "the ruck of obsolete theories about Jesus"; "canned goods"; "stereotyped plans of salvation"; "crystallized and petrified orthodoxies, now largely empty of meaning." The church must purge herself of all these, if she is to be ministrant to people of culture. She is found fault with for holding to a static conception of the church, instead of a dynamic one; for the spending so much labor on the work of self-preservation and self-aggrandizement; for the use of "creeds in their literal rather than in their historic sense."

As regards Jesus of Nazareth, may it not be said that dominant criticism to-day voices an impatience with the undue emphasis placed by the church upon conventional conceptions and dogmas about Him? She places in the



forefront doctrines in the traditional language of other ages and demands that they be swallowed as they are, however unpalatable and indigestible. Such are some common indictments made by hosts of modernists both within and without the church.

I have received a letter from a high-minded and a highly cultivated gentleman who is a member of one of the churches. And there are thousands like him in all the churches—protesting conformists, protesting against traditional ecclesiastical and theological conceptions of Christ, and begging the church to give them the Christ of the Gospels and His living message, and that message interpreted in language “understood by the people” of this age. He fails to get the craved moral and religious reaction, when he attends church, because he does not feel *en rapport* with the forms and language in which the Gospel is presented in the church where he is a regular attendant. It all seems so obsolete. It does not appeal to him, and he craves to be appealed to. He loves and worships the Master, but he sees His face much marred in the dogmatic forms in which He is presented in the churches. Here is his letter.

“There is a large number of thinking men who in this day are not reached by our own or any other church. What is the reason? If it is a lack in our own church, what is that lack?

“It is easy to draw an indictment of many counts, and perhaps to prove most of them, but that is destructive and we are looking for the constructive. The other day I chanced upon a statement of our difficulty, in one of the most talked of novels of the moment. That statement is this: ‘The remedy’s the old remedy. The old God. But it’s more than that. It’s light; more light. The old revelation was good for the old world, and suited to the

old world, and told in terms of the old world's understanding, mystical for ages, steeped in the mystical, poetic for minds receptive of nothing beyond story and allegory and parable. We want a new revelation in terms of the new world's understanding. We want light, light.' Do you suppose an age that knows wireless and can fly is going to find spiritual sustenance in the food of an age that thought thunder was God's speaking?

"Sacerdotalism, medievalism, ritualism, an over insistence upon the words "the church," and even man-made creeds are not the light that will lighten this generation.

"What is that Light? It is of course Christ. We need not abandon what is beautiful in our beloved church, but for my own part I am ready to break the oldest and most beautiful stained glass window in any church if it dims the Light that should shine out. As Bishop Williams said in his memorable sermon at All Souls'—'Let us not build fences to shut out those who would come in.'

"Can't some one say the word that will help carry to the intelligenzia of the day some knowledge of, and some belief in the Light, whom dusty, travel-stained, and tired Paul in Antioch preached to those who knew no God, but so wanted one that they raised an altar to him?"

I should say that men of modern culture need the Gospel as much as do the less cultured people. Souls rich in culture are worth saving as well as souls poor in culture. And the church needs them. She should have room for all those who are steeped in modern thought. But she cannot get them if she insists upon assent to belated conceptions; to traditional doctrines formed by men of a very different world-view. The modernist has a conscience in the matter. He will not assent to what he does not think to be true. He would only enter the church with head erect and with conscience unashamed. It would be well for the

church to say frankly that many of the traditional views of Christianity are relative and admit of modifications and reinterpretations by the new learning.

Bishop Wilmer was once talking to a man about his becoming a member of the church. "But," said the man, "I can't swallow all of your creeds." Then, said the Bishop, "there must be something wrong with your swallowing." But no, I think these modernists might well answer there's something wrong with the thing to be swallowed. It is too antique and bulky and indigestible. Modernists within the church can only swallow the creed whole by giving a symbolical interpretation to some of its clauses, which were formerly taken literally. Thus as to Christ's bodily ascension into heaven with flesh and bones, and His sitting at the right hand of God, and the articles, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," body meaning flesh (*σαρξ*), and "he descended into hell." All these are now taken symbolically. Taken literally in the sense they had at first, they would indeed be hard to swallow. As Bishop Williams said: "When I say the Apostles creed, for example, I may believe somewhat differently about God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost than the Christian Father of the fourth century, or my Christian brother in the next pew. Creeds are symbols in the double sense of the word, not scientific statements. They are flags to follow, not fences to keep our straying feet within the safe paths of orthodoxy. As such they are constantly to be reinterpreted, with the expanding enlightenment of the ages and the growing experience of the individual believer."<sup>1</sup>

But when I present this view of the duty of reinterpreting old creeds through new conceptions, some men have

<sup>1</sup> From a sermon by the Rt. Rev. Charles D. Williams, preached at the consecration on All Souls' Memorial Church, Washington, D. C., October 25, 1914.

said, "But I fear that you are not orthodox." "No, thank God, I am not," has been my reply. It cost me days and nights and years of mental and religious agony in trying to preserve the strict form of orthodoxy in which I was born and bred. No, I am not orthodox in the strict sense of the term. Few, indeed, are so to-day. I might almost say, I heartily thank my heavenly Father, that He hath called me out of that state of damnation. I might say that I was called into a state of salvation by a return to the conceptions of the early Greek Fathers of the Alexandrian School, and so relieved from the damnable state of trying to believe what may be called either orthodoxy, or Augustinian theology. Verily it has been the lengthened shadow of this powerful mind that has long and widely cast a gloomy shadow over the Christian world. It was the Greek thought that formulated the Nicene Creed. The root conception was that of the indwelling of the divine *Logos* in nature and in man, finally incarnated in Jesus of Judea. All human history, both sacred and secular, is the record of God's education of the race. The creeds and codes of all nations are records of the progress of this education. The final full and complete revelation was made in and through Jesus. But the same process of a gradual education of his disciples into a fuller knowledge of it, has been going on through the centuries and is going on through our century. No finality as to forms of knowledge of it by men in any century, can be accepted. Thus far and no farther dares no living church say. Finality means sterility. And a sterile church cannot fructify. We read the records of the various stages of this in the history of Christianity and give them relative worth—chiefly for their own times, but never finality.

There is no *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus* form of the faith. That conception is a fiction of lazy



souls, and a tool used to drill other souls into stagnation of thought; a steam-roller used for partisan purposes. Of absolute infallibility in such knowledge there is none. Infallibility! That has been the dream of mere seminarians and of artful ecclesiastical politicians, who refuse to acknowledge the work of the *Logos* in the movements of human thought and experience in this century, and anathematize all attempts to reset the old truth in new light. Religious men outside the church who rightly decline to endure the whip of such pretended infallibility, often retort that the church is often more tolerant of imperfect Christian lives in her members than she is of the imperfect creeds of those who would gladly become members. A worldly-minded man of social influence or wealth who would swallow any creed, might enter the fold easily and become a pillar of the church. "Money talks" even to the church. Surely there was abundant material for such a wholesome book as Mr. Winston Churchill's "Inside the Cup."

The church to be a teacher in any age, should be a church learning all the new knowledge of that age. To say that she has always taught the *identical* doctrine—the faith once delivered as a jewel in a casket—is to say that she has always been a static church. But her history shows that she has not been thus unwise. Identity is the category of deadness. No *living* thing ever remains identical with itself. It lives and grows by adapting itself to a changing environment. So we should relieve ourselves of the incubus of infallibility and identity that make for a moribund form of Christianity. No infallible church or Bible or reason—that is what we are left with. But we are also left with the progressive stages of knowledge of the revelation of the abiding fullness of the Word made flesh. And the end of our *knowledge* of that is not yet.

Let us dare, however, to see Jesus with our own eyes, even as His first disciples saw Him, with their then modern eyes, colored as they were by their Jewish world-view, even in the traditions given about Jesus in their Gospels. We only replace their Jewish conceptions with our modern ones, even as the Greek Fathers of the early church soon did; each new view of the Master being ministrant to the best giving of His message to the men of their days. Let the church to-day give us a view more ministrant to our needs than that of any other age can be. We are, or we should be, the heir of all other ages. We should learn to appreciate their point of view and their portrait of Christ. We should be the ancients, to be genuinely moderns. In many ways we need to romanticize, to recover much from them that we have lost. Every reformation forward means a deformation, a loss of some of that which is discarded. This, the wiser, the less hot-headed successors of the reformers often recover. The old maxim is true in many matters, "the vanquished give laws to the victors." This gave justifiable ground for some of the work of the Anglo-catholic party. But no cultured mind can romanticize to the full; de-reformize the Reformation; or return to either the primitive or the medieval form of the church. The way is *through* them with the historical spirit of appreciation and thus forward with Jesus, in the modern spirit.

It is needless to enlarge further upon the difficulties that modernists find in the traditional and static conceptions of the church. I am writing for modernists who are incurably religious as well as intellectual. For the many who are merely intellectual and for the more who are merely worldlings I have no message. These latter are in the *pithecanthropopic* stage of imperfection and in the state of sin, in glorifying instead of trying to rise out of that state; trying to make the most out of this life in the



way of comfort and pleasure. Here we have the vulgar pleasant vices of the many and the gilded vices of the upper classes; the smart set and all who are smarting to get into them—social climbers. For all such the need is for a John the Baptist, a Billy Sunday thundering the woes of damnation and calls to repentance.

With a critical appreciation of the church of past ages, we say to modernists, stand by the church. With an appreciation of the difficulties thrown in the way of modernists, we say to the church, stand by the modernists who are trying to make you a living church in this age by modernizing you—at least trying to modernize your interpretation of the traditional interpretation of conceptions that were good in other ages; live now, as you have done in other ages, by self-adaptation to the sustaining environment of this age.

But what, you will ask, do you mean by modernism in religion? What is this modernism? Who are these modernists? Definitions are plentiful. I give mine. The modernist is a religious man who is the grateful heir of past ages, but the slave of none. Definitions of modernisms range all the way from that of Pope Pius X, "Modernism is the synthesis of all heresies," to that of Sabatier, "Modernism is not a system or a new synthesis: it is an orientation." Modernism stands for a new spirit and for modern methods in the study and teaching of religion and ethics. Surely it does not stand for a set of negations, unless modern learning negatives some of the older learning. It accepts the results of modern methods and asks that they be incorporated with older views. It does not offer a new set of dogmas, but it does ask for a modern interpretation of the older ones. It insists that religion is more vital than theology and must be distinguished from it. It alters our scientific, historical and theological out-

look, but leaves our personal relation to Christ untouched. It is a vitalizing spirit making all things new, and an intellectual method rather than a formulated creed. It is the way modernists see things. "The hot emotion of one generation is the cold authority of the next one." And nothing cold is vitalizing.

Modernism seeks to meet difficulties already raised by our modern world-view, rather than to raise up new ones. Mrs. Humphry Ward said: "Modernism is the attempt of the modern spirit, acting religiously, to refashion Christianity, not outside, but inside the warm limits of the ancient churches, to secure not a reduced, but a transformed Christianity." Modernism thinks it is something like blasphemy against the Holy Ghost to deny that He is speaking through men in the twentieth century as strongly and inspiringly as to men of other ages.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says, "A modernist is one who esteems his own age above antiquity."

Father Tyrell says, "By a modernist I mean a churchman of any sort who believes in the possibility of a synthesis between the essential truth of his religion and the essential truth of modernity." Again, "I think that the best description of modernism is that it is the desire and effort to find a new theological synthesis, consistent with the data of historico-critical research." Again the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, speaking of modernism as an aggressive party in the Roman church, says, "Modernism aims at a radical transformation of human thought in relation to God, man, the world and life here and hereafter." It should be noted that these modernists generally are Christian mystics. In the Holy Sacrament they realize that Christ dwells in them and they in Him.

Ofttimes this mystical life is nourished in the sacrament of silence and devout meditation as well as in that of the

Lord's Supper. In their own closet, at home, on a train and in unemployed moments, or with a few others gathered together in His name, they realize His promise "there am I in the midst of them."

They house themselves well enough in any form of the church, very often in the Roman church. Sometimes they seem more like hermit crabs. But modern mystics love a living church—love to realize their heritage in its past, and their at-homentment in its living work in the present. They do not desire a new church or creed or cult. But at least they do desire a modern interpretation of these into conceptions significant to the people of this generation, and then a gradual change in form and language. They love the prayers and hymns of all ages. They also care for modern ones, voicing present thanks and needs. They are glad that their minds are such palimpsests, that the new writing does not obliterate the writings of others in ages past.

"I accept the universe," said Margaret Fuller. Some one repeated this to Carlyle. His response was: "Egad. She had better." We of the twentieth century had better accept our modern world-view, underwritten, though it should be in still legible letters by those of other times. By it we are surrounded. In its atmosphere we think, and act and worship best. Modernists are simply Christians who are trying to live, and to get others to live, in better harmony with our present universe of thought. And we wish to get the teaching church to be a church learning the new learning.

When I think of the bitter wars over doctrinal matters that have gone on through the Christian centuries: of the bitter feelings and bloody and fiery persecution of fellow Christians, aroused over formal intellectual statements about Jesus and His Evangel, I almost feel ashamed to

enter again this war of words. I am sure that every devout disciple of the Master, whether a traditionalist or a modernist, has times when he blushes, as he thinks how much more of his time and energies are spent in arguing about Jesus than in living as His disciple. Let every one rather seek to translate his meager creed about Jesus into deed. Jesus never set His disciples to do the former. The church which is more tolerant of an imperfect life than of an imperfect creed, has little of His tolerance. All creeds are imperfect. Jesus left us no intellectual compend of doctrines. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." The disciples found one casting out devils in Christ's name. They told Jesus "we forbid him, because he followeth not us." But Jesus said, "forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a mighty work in my name that can lightly speak evil of me." He did not encourage heresy hunters. Nor does His holy spirit do so to-day. And we all are so much heresy hunters, fault-finders, critics of our fellow Christians' creeds, and so little critical of our deeds.

Can we not imagine Jesus casting a pitying look upon us in our wranglings about the form of sound words? Let us rather seek to cast out devils, and rejoice in seeking others to do the same, though they "follow not us." Let us seek to be better Christian mystics, "we in Christ and He in us, very members incorporate in His mystical body," which is the blessed company of all that are faithful in deed rather than in creed.

## CHAPTER II

### MODERNISM

I HAVE defined a Modernist as one who recognizes that he is heir of all the ages, but feels and knows that he ought to be the slave of none. As a child grown to manhood and its duties, he feels that he ought not to hold with mortmain the heritage received in an enclosed casket, but rather to follow the example of the fathers in using it in modern ways that he may pass it on to the next age richer than when he received it.

Here let me expand an illustration. A modern man becomes the heir of an old castle, erected, perhaps, on the foundation of an old Roman fortress, and built to meet the needs of its times in successive ages. It stood completed during feudal times, for defensive and offensive warfare for the preservation and extension of the possessions of its owners. With the passing of feudalism some of its old and useless parts were replaced by new ones. After the thirteenth century more space was given for an enjoyment of the amenities of life. Its defensive features were changed as new modes of warfare came with the discovery of gunpowder. Its cross-bows and catapults, its military engines and melted lead, were relegated to chambers for relics; its towers reduced from 200 to 30 feet—marring its architecture, but fitting it to use modern cannon. Later on, its use for military purposes having ceased, it was made more habitable for modern men, by renovations and improvements. But there it stands as a



whole, a gloomy, forbidding fortress, with its castellated architecture; its moat and drawbridge and bastions; its outer and its inner bailey, in which were barracks and hospital and chapel, storerooms and stables with fearsome dungeons beneath. It was handed over to its rightful heir in 1901. It had been his early home. But he had had his *Lehrjahre* and *Wanderjahre* abroad. Now he returns to take possession of it. He must take it as a whole and make it his palace-home. He may do some remodeling for the sake of convenience and make some restorations for the sake of architecture. Some of the old foundations will need replacing and some of the old rooms renovation. Some he cannot use, except as museums, preserving the weapons and furniture of its different epochs. Its dungeons he may fill in or wall up. The old outside bailey he may turn into a flower garden, and the inner one into storerooms. Often he passes through all parts of the castle, letting pride of ancestors and heritage warm his heart and nerve him to be as valiant in his day and generation as they were in theirs. Yet will he introduce the conveniences of modern housekeeping into some of the rooms, or perchance add a new wing to the old castle for this purpose—but in keeping with its old architecture.

But one may say, why not raze the old castle to the ground and build a modern mansion, fitted with all modern improvements? He would do so if he had neither sentiment nor wisdom: neither loyalty nor historical sense. Just how much or how little he may destroy or change depends on sentiment as well as—nay more than—on common sense. If he be a barbarian all will go. If he be a man of culture, as much as possible will be kept intact.

Very recently the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings has been greatly stirred by the Bishop of London's consent to the filling in of the moat, which, since



the day of the Danes, has encircled the Episcopal palace at Fulham. That society offered to raise the two thousand pounds that would be needed to clean out and repair the moat. But the Bishop thinks that, considering the needs of the hosts of men out of work to-day, this would be a sinful expenditure. That is a matter of a good heart and of good common sense. Previously another Bishop had converted a similar moat into a beautiful garden. Was that a desecration? Perhaps these Bishops would be more hesitant if the question concerned the filling in of some of the noxious ecclesiastical pools in their domains.

The heritage of an old castle coming to a modern man! Here let the picture be transferred to the case of a modernist in an old church, redolent of the piety of ancestors who lived, fought and labored in it; full of historical associations, rich with that which cultivated the religious nature.

The wise man knows that he cannot well create a new institution, like that of the church. He will suffer much in it that is out of tune with his religion, for the sake of the much that it affords for its nourishment. He would seek rather to reform than to destroy. He would preserve and seek to transmit this heritage, increased and enlivened by the spirit of the new age, rather than aid any project to build a new one with all its crass vulgarisms of an uncultured modern age, and the defects which would soon become greater than those in the old one.

But the modernist here puts in a justifiable demurrer. That is all right from an academical, as well as from the sentimental point of view. But it is not practicable. Look at the old castle. The growing city surrounds it. It is relatively a blockade to progress. It should either be converted into a warehouse, or modernized throughout, or razed to the ground. The river on which it is built is

filled with steamboats of traffic or pleasure. The rest of the shore is lined with docks and more space for them is demanded. Or many guests or new members of the family are coming to the castle. Shall the heir house them in the old parts of the castle? Can he give them a warm reception in its cold and gloomy rooms? He may state his historical and sentimental view of them. He may apologize for much, smile at much that he does not take very seriously. But he can only make the new members feel at home in the renovated parts of the castle. If necessary he will renovate the whole of it.

Christianity, we say, was the heir of the Jewish church. Really it was the heir of much more than that. But how long did it preserve that heritage intact? What was Jesus' attitude to it? Did He not destroy it, while fulfilling its purpose in a new and larger way? How long did the early disciples offer the Gospel in its Jewish form, in their missionary efforts? How much of its Levitical law, and its national cult, with its sabbath and circumcision, did the new church keep? "Let the dead bury their dead." "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" Do not these Gospel sayings voice the attitude of the Master and, later on, that of the Apostles, towards the old heritage?

Yes, we believe the demurrer of modernists is justifiable and should be sustained. The wise man's opinion is unwise. Still the modernist should be as patient with the church as he is with any other institution. Every institution carries with it a lot of old material that is regarded as outworn and is so interpreted. It is so imbedded in the old that it would be hard to separate the two. Besides the religious emotions cling to the old. Only in times of a great revival will they cling to new forms.

Again this castle figure is too mechanical an one to

apply to any institution of the spirit of man—to any age-long vital organism. Perhaps that of the chambered nautilus is a better one.

“Build thee more stately mansions, oh, my soul.  
As the swift seasons roll.  
Leave thy-low-vaulted past.  
Let each new temple nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
’Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life’s unresting sea.”

The nautilus does build new chambers, but it builds them on and largely out of the old ones. No new chamber could be formed or continue except in vital organic connection with all the older ones. It is an organic whole. Schism means death. Moreover the nautilus is never unchambered, never leaves its outgrown shell, till death comes. Body and soul together grow till death doth them part. The houseless, homeless Christian is rarely more than a lifeless abstraction. Christianity is a social religion. One Christian no Christian. A social religion and no body—no religious institution, is another abstraction. Let them both grow together—grow into “a dome more vast,” till death doth part. The old shell does not vomit out the new life. The new shell does not forsake the old convolutions. The shell enchains, but its chief function is to sustain the life. This may serve as a picture of the modernist with a psychological knowledge of the relation of soul and body and an historical appreciation of the need and value of institutional life. But the picture is a picture, not a photograph of any church visible, though it arrogate to itself the title of Catholic.

But if taken too literally, the modernist will put in another justifiable demurrer. The nautilus wants to sail

and tries to sail, but with what an impediment. The old and nearly lifeless convolutions hold it down. What is known in the army as *impedimenta*, things that impede rapid marching, are the provisions of food and arms and baggage that are necessary to its maintenance. It casts aside all unnecessary food and baggage. It will have none of this sort of *impedimenta*. Think how much of this sort of impedimenta is being carried by all the churches. The Methodists have their outgrown *Book of Discipline* and are calling for a new one "conforming to twentieth century needs and thought." The Greek church and that of the Baptists are holding on to their scriptural but belated doctrine of immersion, the latter confining its use to only converted adults. The Presbyterians still present the Westminster Confession of faith as their standard. The Episcopalians will print the XXXIX *Articles of Religion* in the back part of their Prayer Book, while many of all parties in that church hope that they will soon be printed only outside the Prayer Book. Hosts of Presbyterians shrug their shoulders, and salve their conscience when assenting to much in their standard. But when the XXXIX *Articles* go out of the Prayer Book, as they have already gone out of authoritative belief, there still remains much of their obsolete terminology imbedded in the various services. It would be difficult to expunge them. They are practically encysted. But they give offense to any modernist who thinks that they are to be taken without many grains of salt. They are impediments to those within, and an obstruction to those without but wishing to enter the church. Something should be done to explain away their position of authority over men's minds and consciences, or to remove them altogether.

But the nautilus figure may afford an ideal to any mother church and to any church son, in their mutual rela-



tions in times of great strain, perhaps the birth-pains of a new convulsion. Neither the murder of the new born Holy Innocents—excommunication, on the one hand nor matricide—schism from the church on the other hand! That is the way mother nature works in the nautilus. With man, there is always so much sinful selfishness and capricious willfulness; so much lust for autocratic power and so much lack of appreciation of a nurturing institution—so much of the devil in it all, that the ideal is never realized. But, at least, let it be accepted as the ideal goal that our whole groaning and travailing Christianity striveth to attain.

But the modernist, while recognizing that he is the heir of all the ages, feels and knows that he ought not to be the mere slave of any one of them—the apostolic, primitive patristic, medieval or reformation age. Though the umbilical cord be unseverable, the mature man may stretch the mother apron strings till they break, without breaking with the domestic circle. Rarely being an ascendant, sometimes more of a descendant from his parents in the way of moral character, the modernist is apt to know more and to know some things better than they know them, and many things that they never knew. Of knowledge in the higher sense of the term, this is often untrue. But he has had a broader education—has studied in more fields, has traveled more; lived in more intellectual and social circles. Wise parents and churches recognize this. They rejoice to see their children's progress beyond and above their own station. Proud are the mothers who realize that their children know more than they do. And the children, because they have thus broken her apron strings and fared forth to discover new worlds, as their parents did before them, will they cease to love and obey her? Must they believe that she is infallible in all spheres; that there is

nothing beyond her apron strings, in order to show her true filial reverence? Must one be an abject slave, a conformist to all mother's ideas and ways? Must he not feel that he should bring all his new culture and lay it at mother's feet as a tribute and a contribution to the domestic circle? Parents exist to help their children and in turn the children feel bound to help them in expansion of ideas as well as in ways of living. How the son, returning from new scenes, rejoices the mother's heart as she, with doting fondness, listens to his tales of different scenes and new ideas. And that is something that no son can do, if he remains forever tied to her apron strings; what no modernist can do if he is slave of any past age. He must increase his heritage of the ages and leave it greater and richer to pass on to the next age.

Slave of none, otherwise he cannot fulfil his duty as an heir. Slave of no institution if that institution is to be a vital and growing one. Our picture has told our tale. The institution is the church in any of her historical forms—an historical castle, a chambered nautilus. The modernist is the heir, the newly forming convolution of the nautilus.

But before working out these pictures into the frame of historical religious experience let me dwell a moment on the maternal and the filial relations in the church. We Protestants are often forced to ask why Catholics are more loyal to Rome than Protestants are to their churches. We would fain explain it by her autocratic domineering over her members, by her official tyranny. But that is not the root cause. Let us admit that it is because of her mothering side, that they accept her ecclesiastical and doctrinal *dicta*. She mothers them better than do our Protestant churches—mothers them too much, we think; keeps them slaves; at best children intellectually and morally. The filial spirit is more loving. The voice of the mother, what-



ever it says, is the voice of God. Because of this, how rarely she has occasion for heresy trials that mean, "get out of my house."

If any unmotherly church should say to me "get out," then temperamentally, as a Christian mystic, I might feel like going to the almost creedless, cultless Quakers. But with my appreciation of the need and worth of institutions, I might have to go to Rome, the mother of many Christian mystics, as well as the mother of so many repulsive doctrines and crude superstitions. Who would not be a Roman Catholic, if he could be a St. Francis of Assisi, one of the most Christlike of men! But no, if one remembers the pathos of that life and the life of his regenerative order. Power was what Rome has always wanted. She ecclesiasticized the life out of St. Francis and out of his Order. In its present form it is utterly sterile. His Third Order, which he meant to be a socially regenerative one, is now a mere name. He was, it is true, bred in Rome, but she bled the life out of him and out of his Order. And official Rome has never lost her lust of worldly power. If she cannot mother her children to obedience then she smothers them to death. Thus she has smothered the whole of the modernists within her realm. The only hope is that she will never be able to smother to death the form of *L'Américanisme*, under which her modernists flourished in this country. Is it possible that the Latin heel can ultimately crush the American head?

Little need be said about the value, in fact the necessity, of institutions for the education of the individual and the race. That is writ large in every place of man's development in every age and clime. The history of man's education is the history of the educational institutions of family, church, state, school, society, science, art, literatures, economics, fraternities, labor brotherhoods,—of

every sphere where the aim is to promote unities and a higher way of living; of every way that helps to socialize a race, races and the race.

The most comprehensive and the most elusive of conceptions as to the relations between God and humanity is that of the Kingdom of God. It has a long—almost a world-long—history. It is found not only in the Jewish conception of it, but as an ideal in all religions and politics, of what it all means—this life of the human race on earth and its ultimate goal.

Jesus adopted the current Jewish ideal and adapted it to His ideal. An extreme school of critics holds that He did not adapt it, but that He accepted, was adapted to it, enslaved by it. If we thought this to be the truth, as maintained by Schweitzer and Loisy and others; if we thought that Jesus essayed to be the Messiah of the Jews; to bring to fruitage their conception of it and that He failed in his attempt at his last entrance into Jerusalem, a poor deluded religious and national zealot, then we should write no more, nor would there ever have been any church history to be read. It is true that He never gave any full and detailed account of this conception as adapted to His mission. It is through a wonderful series of parables that we must read it. His disciples never understood His conception. They have handed it down, clothed with their own preconceptions. "But it seems a perverse blindness to what is palpably distinctive in the teaching of Jesus, to hold Him to have been possessed by the apocalyptic conceptions of the kingdom which ruled the mind of the people."<sup>1</sup>

In St. John's Gospel we find that the conception of eternal life is equated with and takes the place of that of the Kingdom of God, this latter being used but twice in this Gospel. The whole of Jesus' teaching shows this to

<sup>1</sup> Francis A. Henry, "Jesus and the Christian Religion," p. 20.

of it, when it is identified with the church. The church came into existence to further the far wider Kingdom. It is a means to that end. It dares not seek self-aggrandizement. But it has done this and it has suffered the penalty of being a poor means to such a grand purpose. It has sought wealth and gotten it. It has sought earthly power and honor and glory and gotten them, but it has thereby always weakened itself as a promoter of the Kingdom. The Pope pointing to his heaps of money at the Vatican, said to a poor friar, "If St. Peter were here now, he would not need to say, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" The friar replied, "Nor could he have the spiritual power to say 'arise and walk'—to restore the lame man to health."

The various other circles in the Kingdom have often done better work than the church. Why are so many good men and women outside of her fold to-day? She surely has no monopoly of the moral and spiritual life in the world. Members of labor brotherhoods find more of brotherliness in their organizations than the church seems to offer them. Then as to others, a devout and learned professor of theology once said, "I am disposed to think that a great and increasing portion of the moral worth of society lies outside the Christian church, separated from it not by godlessness, but rather by exceptionally intense moral earnestness. Many, in fact, have left the church in order to be Christians."

When we think of the modern conception of salvation, which has come from the modern study of the life and mission of the Master—the conception that one is saved just so far as he is working in the Master's spirit and for His Kingdom on earth—when we consider this, do we not know that men will simply smile at any church that dares to utter the old cry, *extra mecclesia nulla salus*—no salvation outside the church.

Christ's Kingdom is identical with moral goodness, wherever it is found. The philosopher and the scientist reading God's thoughts after Him and trying to follow in these footprints; the devoted mother, the loyal soldier and sailor; the faithful teacher and lawyer and doctor, the loyal to the ideal of the many vocations into which men are called—all these are promoting that Kingdom on earth.

“A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgery divine;  
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,  
Makes that and the action fine.”

The master passion of the Master of Christians was that of promoting the Kingdom of a heavenly Father on earth. We may thank the advocates of Jesus as possessed with the Jewish apocalyptic vision, for having shown us how the idea of the Kingdom is the fundamental one. We give His disciples the blame for attributing their national conception of the Kingdom to Jesus. He adopted the term as a conventional symbol of the supreme good for the human race. He adapted it to all future ideals as to what things are really worth while in the life of men on earth. To-day we may say it stands for social righteousness; for any and all social states of men in so far as the mind of the Master rules; in so far as His motives constrain; in so far as they lead to a following the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount making social life worth living. The gospel of the secular life is another name for it. *The Republic of God* is a good modern equivalent.

Did Jesus establish the visible church as this Kingdom? No! He did not. His conception was a far wider one than that of any church organization, however catholic. The church grew naturally out of the association of disciples, when they began to propagate the gospel of this



have been His conception of his work and mission, rather than that of the Jewish conception of the Kingdom of God. The category used is biological rather than political. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Both St. Matthew and St. Mark preserve some of Jesus' biological conception, amidst their Hebraic clothes of Messianism, wherewith they marred His form. Either Jesus was a deluded zealot or His disciples misunderstood Him. "Verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." They took this literally, if they did not put it into His mouth. If he uttered this He did not take it literally, or, He was mistaken.

Upon the whole, the judgment of the church has been right in rejecting millenarianism. It has flourished only sporadically in small sects of zealots for the Jewish conception.

It is but fair to add that the Jewish Messianic conceptions were later and far lower than that of the Jewish prophets. So spiritual were these generally that it is possible to see the conception of Jesus in them, in spirit and in rudimentary form. "The Gospel in the Prophets," how much better Hebrew clothing to put upon Jesus, than the contemporary conceptions of the frenzied zealotry of a political party. No better work is needed now than a truthful refutation of the now somewhat vociferous exponents of Jesus, as the apocalyptic Messiah, the deluded Jew who perished in his zealous attempt to realize it. It is a brief for Jesus as greater than His biographers.

Christ's mission was to spread His Kingdom on earth. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth." Doing God's will in any sphere is promoting this Kingdom. It is inward as a vital principle. But it works outward as the heaven does. Jesus never succeeded in getting His con-



ception fully into the minds of His immediate disciples. Many of His parables they understood not. Christ's Kingdom is the Kingdom of the Father. Kingdom is used as a conventional symbol. His thought is rather that of a *family* composed of those who gain a moral likeness to the Father in heaven. It is a social order inclusive of all social orders on earth where the Father is loved and obeyed and when the brothers love each other even as He loved men. It was a sociological ideal. It was at hand. It was working in their midst. Its spirit would work as leaven till the whole lump be leavened. It works so slowly, that we sometimes fear the earth will too soon reach the predicted frozen condition that will make it impossible for any life to exist on it. How comprehensive was His ideal. Everywhere, in family, church, state, the social and economic orders, in schools and workshops, in literature and science and art, in all societies and fraternities, wherever two or three of any nation or religion are gathered together this kingdom of the Father is present just so far as all their doings are in accord with His will, as revealed in the spirit of the Master. To get and keep in this kingdom, and to spend one's life in service promoting it among one's fellows; to seek chiefly this kingdom, this is the primal and central duty of all men. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God *on earth*. Who can doubt that Jesus put chief emphasis on this? When one reads the Gospels, he realizes how petty and selfish is the idea of personal salvation from punishment hereafter. Yet for how many centuries such a salvation has usurped the rightful place in Jesus' thought of the kingdom.

Surely a readjustment of emphasis is needed in this matter—perhaps a restatement of belief as to salvation being a state of fitness for service in the Kingdom.

Again how false and how belittling of His conception

Kingdom. True, the church has often identified *herself* with that Kingdom. It is not worth while to refute such an arrogant and groundless assumption. The most that can be said of it is that the church has had the function of promoting the religious life of men; of their relations to God the Father through His son Jesus Christ. It is thus ministrant to the *spiritual* (a far wider term than religious) life of men in all secular spheres of this kingdom. The church is the natural and legitimate outcome of the Gospels. It is *jure divino*, so far as it serves its ministrant purpose. She has had a wondrous history of mighty accomplishments. It would be easy to eulogize her for all her good works, and she justly deserves such eulogy. And this should justly accompany any indictments and harsh judgments, though fairly made against her. Without her, as the chief ministrant of the religious life, as ministering to the larger spiritual life of the race, life on earth would be far less worth living to-day, as well as in centuries past. She has been an age-long institution for the welfare of the race. She has changed, grown too slowly with the progress of the world. When a living church she has lived with her times; the purveyor of eternal life in the temporal life. In a tree, the real life from its roots is found in the present new layer. The former layers form the moribund stock which defies the storms and gives support to the new growth. The leaves and fruitage of past years fallen to the ground form soil for the roots. Its annual growths have increased its girth and solidity. The new layer holding all these in its embrace, does the vital work of present growth. That may serve as a picture of a really living church.

Such has been the method, the unconscious logic of the church through the ages. Many of the supposed *impedimenta* have really been encysted to give strength and expan-

sion, while all the essential ones have been preserved in its growth from root upward—polity, creed, cult and sacred literature.

“I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest  
Against the earth’s sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;  
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.”<sup>1</sup>

Only God can make a living church and keep it living and growing. As I look out of my window, my eye rests upon a stately, wide-spreading tree—a Tulip Poplar—that “lifts her leafy arms to pray” and stretches them out to give shade from torrid sun to cattle lying beneath it at mid-day. It was a large tree twenty-five years ago. But it had become hollow hearted. Children made a play-house inside of it. One day it got on fire within. The lambent flames raged furiously, almost to its very top, and we looked for its crashing to the earth. The fire purged out all its rottenness. It stopped when it came to its living parts. It continued to grow. There it stands to-day, a

<sup>1</sup>From poems by Joyce Kilmer, a young American poet who made the supreme sacrifice in the late war.

big and living tree that "only God can make" and keep living through cleansing fire.

"The Church in the Furnace" is the title of a volume written by seventeen English army chaplains in the recent war. It is a loud cry against the futility of their church to meet the needs of the Tommies in their hours of agony and in their hours of sheer daily drudgery. The church was speaking in theological language—in a dialect not understood even by those who had been trained in her. The message of the book is like that of the old Hebrew prophets. "Cry aloud." "Spare not." "O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean?" "Repent and return from your idols." The whole church to-day would profit by reading their lamentation over the use of outgrown forms; their cry for better vernacular ones to meet the religious needs of men in this century; their loyal cry for the cleansing fire of the Holy Ghost to burn up her old idols and shibboleths. Better let the fire burn up the rotten and decadent parts. Life from the roots will flow all the better in the living present growth. The church has never been quite dead. Thank God for that. The church has never been entirely lukewarm. The church has never quite ceased to appeal to the higher nature of man. And, though she has given too many *theories about* Jesus and His work, she has never ceased to emphasize his supremacy. She has been the church of Christ, however much she has apostatized from His spirit at times. She has kept alive His Gospel for nineteen centuries. Without her, we should be ignorant of that Gospel to-day. Whatever the forbidding forms in which she has sometimes presented it, she has preserved and points back to the historical Jesus of the four Gospels.

"The church's one foundation" has always been "Jesus Christ our Lord." When she harks back to Jesus of Naza-

reth she gets and gives warm throbbing, winsome new life.

The castle, the nautilus, the tree, the picture! How does it work out historically with the church? That is too long a story for this place. When worked out through the nineteen centuries of her history, it shows all the limitations as well as all the vital truths of the pictures. Ever growing through and in spite of all limitations—that is the true story of the church read with no pessimistic view of the ways of God in all history; the justification of God in His way through all institutions that promote the welfare of mankind in the school of His kingdom on earth.

The church as an organization for the propagation of the spirit of the Master—of the disposition of heart and mind that will further the coming of His Kingdom on earth, sanctifying all done in other spheres of man's secular life, has four aspects—a Way of Life, Polity, Doctrine and Cult.



## CHAPTER III

### POLITY

LIFE is more than the house. Yet life perishes without the house. Back to Jesus for the life principle. Then forward with Jesus, through the ages and changes of the house, making the church the nurturing home of the religious needs of the race.

In this institution we may distinguish four phases: *Life, Polity, Doctrine* and *Cult*, the latter three of worth just so far as they are ministrant to the first. Of these let me premise that Rome has too much of polity, Protestantism too much of doctrine, and both Rome and Protestantism in need of revision of cult—Rome in the way of purgation and exclusion and Protestantism in the way of enrichment. But of the first—the Life—both have too little. And life is the essential, permanent element in Christianity. Hence the perpetual need of going back to Jesus, especially when we feel the strangling or smothering of this life in the relatively non-ministrant phases of polity, doctrine and cult. In the primitive community polity and dogma were unborn. All was inchoate. The belief in the second coming of Christ in that generation, yielded them no need of polity and dogma. They were waiting. It may be allowed, that they had only a *way of life*, but not an *ad interim Ethik*. Whoever goes back to Jesus for His way of life, must go back to the four Gospels, as these are now seen by the aid of modern Biblical criticism. Whoever does this may rightly be esteemed a mem-

ber of some one of the many folds of His one flock, and should so be considered by the representatives of the official and doctrinal sides of that fold. Jesus of the Gospels and His way of life! Jesus, Him first, Him last and His way of life, that is the root and heart of vital Christianity.

I am disposed to say but little as to Polity—the administrative phase of the organization. It is the least vital of the three. No one form is necessary to the being (*esse*) of the church, though different people may consider some special form best for the well being (*bene esse*) of the church.<sup>1</sup>

The *jure divino* character of any form of polity cannot be proven by an appeal to the New Testament. The Master himself established none. His interest was the promotion of the Kingdom. We cannot go back to Jesus here. He had no polity. He lived under that of the Jewish church. So did the early Jewish Christian communities. How little sympathy and how much antagonism He showed in his relation to “the rulers of the Jews!” He would transcend the whole of their legal view with all the evils that it had begotten.

After His ascension His band of disciples became a community, a party within the Jewish church. The glimpses that we get of that inchoate community, show us a body of men with a mission, organizing from time to time in ways best fitted to meet the present needs. Within a century Episcopacy seems to have become the regnant form. From that time we find Episcopacy covering a longer time and a broader territory than any other form of church government. Of course mere length and breadth of Episcopacy does not prove it to be the only or best polity. But development justifies the three forms—the Episcopal,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. at length my “Studies in Hegel’s Philosophy of Religion,” Appendix on “Christian Unity.”

the Presbyterian, and the Congregational. Some form is always necessary, but it is by far the least excellent side of the church. It is not a part of the faith.

The polity part of the institution, whatever form it takes, must be retained, but also restrained and kept from the assumption that it is the most vital part of the church. Identified, as it was in Rome, with the clergy, it led to such a state of affairs that it raised the cry *écrasez l'infâme*—crush the church. That was the state into which the Eastern church, the religiously moribund orthodox church, had brought its people, that made the same cry, “crush the church,” possible with Bolshevism. Simplify the machinery. Reduce its power and pomp. Give the laymen more voice therein.

Then as to the official church unity, we may refer to two attempts made by the Episcopalians, in this country and in England. The annual convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1886 proposed the historic Episcopate, as the basis for unity of polity. Immediately the high churchman began to insist that the historic Episcopate could only mean the sacerdotal doctrine of the Apostolic succession and the *jure divino* theory of Episcopacy. That killed the movement for unity of polity with other Protestant churches. Their view is utterly an unhistorical fabrication. Christ never instituted it. And the conception of a body of men as necessary channels of his Holy Spirit is the very opposite of His spirit and method.

In the late Lambeth conference the high churchmen again thwarted the wish of many bishops to present the historic Episcopate as a basis of reunion. Its proposal of it was so worded that the other churches saw that it meant more than a polity; that it carried with it the idea of giving clergymen of other Protestant churches something essential; something more than they could give in return.

In a word the high church theory of Apostolic succession was implied in the Lambeth proposal. Since writing the above, *The Churchman* for November 26th has come to hand. Its editorial gives the same view of the matter. I am glad to give a quotation from it as it voices my sentiments. "We have the deepest respect for those Nonconformist churchmen in England who refuse to be decoyed by any of the Lambeth proposals which cast a doubt upon the validity of their own orders. Church unity is not precious enough to Christendom to be purchased by such a concession. Nothing must be done, say a minority, which shall imperil our efforts towards unity with Rome. Nothing must be done, say others, and *The Churchman* is of the number, which shall make impossible unity with other Protestant Communion."

The first step toward official, often miscalled organic unity of the churches, is that of a Federation of the churches, not that of a *super* official church. Rome would show us only this latter way, and none could do it better. A Borgia, Alexander VI would make its most potent head. Federation! Episcopalians may well be ashamed of the weak and non-committal attitude of their church in this matter in her last General Convention.

Then intercommunion. But we blush at the Kikuyu and Panama incidents. In inviting members of the other churches to the Holy Communion, I sometimes remind our own people, that we should not do this as an act of condescension, as it would be, unless we were willing to accept a like invitation from their churches. Exchange of pulpits, intercommunion and the federation of churches, are practical ways that should be used.

What is the matter with the church? Oh, say some good churchmen in the Protestant Episcopal church, it is the lack of *Church* unity; the evils of divisions between

the larger historical branches of the one Holy Catholic Church—The Roman, the Eastern and the Anglican branches. But can we believe that, if this were achieved, many good people now outside would hasten to get inside? Believe who may, we do not. At least it would all depend upon a spiritual revival being coincident with reunion. No reunion of wilting branches would avail, if they were not spiritually branches of the living vine; unless the spirit of the Master flowed more richly through them all.

Suppose the dead church of Sardis and the lukewarm church of Laodicea (*Rev. iii*) had united, would that have made a live and aggressive spiritual force in the world? This reunion of Christendom, alas, is thought of too much in the way of a church polity. It is called an organic unity. It would rather be a mechanical one. I know no more perversely perverted use of a scriptural text than that of Jesus' prayer "that they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." Unity of spirit! That is the true, vital organic unity. *Ubi Spiritus, ibi ecclesia.*

Oh, the inanity and the vanity of some of our Bishops and clergy in flirting with the eastern Holy Orthodox Church in their efforts for such a dead mechanical unity. For that church is, both in thought and sentiment, oceans and continents and ages apart from western Christianity. It stands for a petrified orthodoxy and a stagnant autocracy. And how painful, nay how ludicrous, has been any approach to the crafty Roman church, the master diplomat. But when the spirit of fraternal relations with other Protestant churches moves in many hearts in the Episcopal church, all practical steps toward manifesting this unity of spirit, are blocked by the extreme high church party. Take the members of the monastic *Order of the Holy*



*Cross* as foremost leaders of this backward movement. They have everything Roman—except the Pope—mass, mariolatry, celibacy of the clergy, the seven sacraments. Reunion with Rome is their fondest desire. Polity is a matter of the faith. Schism is the deadliest of sins. They must see that the papacy was, and is, the historical normal and logical result of their conception of church polity. Nursed in the Protestant Episcopal Church from puling infancy, this party has grown into domineering age and strength. It has become almost intolerably intolerant of Protestantism in the Protestant Episcopal Church. It is hastening a crisis, when there will be schism from one side or the other. We cannot call it a school of thought, since it is chiefly one of memory, of old traditions. But it is also most active in its propagation of medievalism.

Surely the members of the *Order of the Holy Cross* are open to a very strong suspicion that they are Jesuits in disguise, in the service of the Roman church. Sometimes we feel like saying: Oh, Rome! take in thy well grown child, conceived and born in the sin of schism, but still the child of thy spirit. It is ill at home in a Protestant church, and pray God, it may never be able to do as it wishes—carry it all back to thy fold.

We would pay just tribute to the narrow type of holy living of these fathers; tribute to their self-sacrificing work in stimulating the religious life in others and tribute to their devotion to our common Master. If they would only let others show their equal devotion in modern ways: if they were not so insistent upon making their brethren adopt their medieval type; if they were not such polemical propagandists; if they were a bit more modest and tolerant of other views, we should be thankful to have them continue in our church, instead of going to their more congenial

home—Rome. We believe in keeping our church as comprehensive as possible. But we do not believe in Romanizing it.

Pardon another reference to the organization of the Episcopal church. There is a movement to forward its development—on the hierarchical, rather than on its democratic side. It wants to have the presiding Bishop's residence in Washington and to have Archbishops and a centralization and multiplication of machinery. Rome led the way before, and a Pope was the natural and logical result. We want no more ecclesiastical titles and offices, but more simplification and spirituality. An American Bishop should not look forward to having a palace—perhaps not even a cathedral, unless that exotic can be thoroughly modernized, as I think can be done. A fine cathedral inspires devotion in all who see it and in all who enter it. It can be made a house of prayer for all people. It can be made the center of learning and of pulpit eloquence. Care should be taken not to use it for the self-aggrandizement of any one church, nor for enhancing the external pomp surrounding an American Bishop, nor for weakening of the work of parishes and a semi-cathedralizing of their work in the diocese. Well may rich and poor join in giving a part of their offering to the erection of such a building.

The art effect is akin to, and inspires religious emotion.

A national cathedral of the Protestant Episcopal Church! Yes, let us have it as a house of prayer and praise for all people. Rich men can do more towards saving their souls by contributing to its erection than in many other forms of ostentatious gifts. Fools they are if they do not in some way contribute largely to works beneficent for the uplift of men ere they hear the words—"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

But how much better it would be to have a national cathedral for all souls of the many folds of His one flock—a house of God that no one church could claim, or use for its own aggrandizement. How much more truly catholic would such a cathedral be. How much more like our national political Capitol for men of all political parties.

A fancy you say. Nay, but a realizable ideal. Moreover, when there comes a federation of nations—a *super* state, with its *super* Capitol there should come too a *super* Cathedral for people of all the religions on the face of the earth. The Pantheon at Rome, so wonderfully impressive in its simplicity, might be a model for it. Only the niches should be cleared of the tawdrily ornamented altars and filled with exquisitely chiselled statues of the great prophets, who spake their message to their people according to the wisdom given unto them—Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet and other prophets, along with the prophets of the Jewish people.

The dangers of officialism and its machinery are too well known to need many words here. The genius of any polity should be to rule for the benefit of those ruled. Too often this is perverted into that of ruling for the benefit of the rulers. Ecclesiastical Machiavellianism in the official part of the church came long before Machiavelli. It comes to every form of officialism. It is found to-day in the Methodist church and in other churches besides that of Rome, though in a much less aggravated form. So we say, go slow with the official unity, the unity of polity. Prepare the way by getting the sort of unity that Christ prayed for, the spiritual unity of Himself with the Father. (St. John xvii, 21.) Let this process go on through federation and fellowship and intercommunion till love reigns; till Christ reigns within and then *Polity* may pass

in music, if not out of sight, into a less noxious, because a more ministrant, shepherding and a less ruling function. Either the power element of Rome, or the love element of the Good Shepherd—the former if any official, so-called organic unity of Christendom be shortly achieved; the latter, if we all abide a wee in our own folds and labor therein for the spirit of the Master and for oneness with the Father.

In this aspect of the church, one can say as it has been said of women: “The women! God bless them! True that sometimes we don’t get along very well with them, but then we could never get along at all, without them.”

## CHAPTER IV

### DOCTRINE

**D**OCTRINE means teaching. Every institution has its teaching side, in which it sets forth the object of its existence and its fundamental principles. The teaching side of an institution is much more vital than that of polity. It is only when some of these teachings are set forth by official authority that they become dogmas.

The largest part of church doctrine has no such official authority. It may be the teaching of some great theologian, or the opinions of some parties in the church, or the general belief of a church at some given time. All such doctrine has only relative worth and authority, and so is changeable. To-day there is a great deal of restiveness under forms of both doctrines and dogmas. This is an anti-doctrinal and anti-dogmatic period in the life of the church.

The dogmatic side is all contained in the Nicene Creed—properly speaking, in the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan symbol, known as the Nicene creed. For the first three hundred years the church had no form of dogmatic teaching. Certainly the apostles did not formulate dogmas. What became such was simply the teaching used in their missionary work. Ofttimes they set it forth to meet current difficulties. The Epistles were personal “tracts for the times.” “They taught according to the wisdom given



unto them." They had no New Testament before them. They were without thought that what they wrote would later on be canonized as Sacred Scriptures. They had no prevision of Nice, or of the Reformation. St. Paul, that wonderful Christian mystic, teacher and church founder, thus began in his Epistles the teachings which eventuated in dogmas. His teachings were carried on and developed by Platonic thinkers in the church through the Nicene period, and then on and off, till St. Thomas turned the church from Plato to Aristotle, in the thirteenth century.

There were parties in the primitive communities that threatened to tear it asunder. St. Peter in his day, as many more in this day, found in St. Paul's teachings "some things hard to be understood." He himself did not speak in Paul's dialect, did not accept his *dicta*. He says, or some one said it for him, that St. Paul only wrote "according to the wisdom given unto him." On the other hand St. Paul says of St. Peter: "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Barnabas was "carried away with the dissimulation of the Jewish party in this matter." In another dispute between Paul and Barnabas we read that "the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder, one from the other." But then there was no infallibly inspired New Testament to appeal to, as there is none now. There are more things in St. Paul's epistles, that modernists find hard to understand than St. Peter found. Our general world-view is so very different. But we also must teach "according to the wisdom given" unto us in this day. We must go back, not only through reformation and scholastic and patristic views but also through St. Paul and St. Peter to the Jesus of the gospels for *The life*, and see it with our own modern eyes. And woe be to that fold that says nay to the one who says:

“If Jesus Christ is a man  
And only a man—I say  
That of all mankind, I cleave to him  
And to him shall I cleave away.”

Modernists may be accused of over emphasizing the real humanity of Jesus. But that is as integral a part of the creed as that of his real divinity. So high a churchman as Bishop Gore, while deploring this, excuses it. Speaking of the theories (about Jesus) of the modernists, he concludes: “What are we to do in the face of the modernist movement? I will speak now of only one thing. It is a reaction for which the Catholic Church is largely responsible. Over long ages it obscured the full Gospel reality of our Lord’s humanity. It thus came about that very important elements of the truth about him were brought into notice again from quarters more or less alien from the Catholic standpoint—as by Shelley, or the author of “*Ecce Homo*” or Dr. Glover. These recovered truths have fascinated men and reattracted them to Jesus; but so far as to make them distrustful of the church which had ignored them. We must make it evident again that all these elements of truth are part of our heritage. We must give fresh and constant study to the Prophets and the Gospels. We must not be content to appeal simply to authority—especially as in the Anglican Church, the mere appeal to authority is for different reasons ineffective. We must think out again what we believe and why we believe it, so as to be able to teach afresh, and in such a way as to interest men’s minds, and to win their hearts, the old truth about God and Christ and the Spirit. We have been giving too much attention in our preaching to subordinate points.”

“If Jesus Christ is a God—  
And the only God—I swear

I will follow him, through heaven and hell,  
The earth the sea and the air."

And that is the way of the modernists in their emphasis on the reality of our Lord's humanity. They might even be accused of Jesuolatry. They have reached his divinity through his humanity. At a recent conference of modernists Dean Rashdall read a paper setting forth the way the Divinity of our Lord seemed to him most likely to appeal to the present age. His Bishop was assailed with demands to "either prosecute the Dean of Carlisle, or at once condemn his paper as heretical." The Bishop says: "I have read his paper carefully and can find nothing in it which amounts to the denial of any article of the creed. So far from being a denial of the Divinity of our Lord, it is an attempt at once to explain and establish it." But of this more in a later chapter.

For doctrine we must go through that of all the Christian centuries, learning and unlearning as we go, back to St. Paul. For better and for worse he began, what was inevitable to thinking man, the use of the intellect on that which is primarily of the heart, in framing it all into intellectual form; or a dogmatic estimate of Jesus and His work and message and mission. A full consideration ought to be given to the world-view, the mental horizon and atmosphere, the environment in which *The life* came to Him. Suffice it to say that it was that of the Jews, especially the Jews of the dispersion, the Hellenized Jews. He was a pharisee of the pharisees, but he was more; a citizen of the Greek city Tarsus. Judaism did not limit his intellectual horizon. He transplanted the Jewish sect from its narrow intellectual outlook to the broader one of Greece. The Jewish Messiah soon became the Greek

*Logos.* That was the way Greeks could understand Him—in their own broader dialect.

The following discussion of the Nicene Creed can interest only theologians. It interests me profoundly. That is why I wrote it. And that is why I let an abridged statement of it stand. Many modernists will not agree with it.

The Greeks were thinkers. And so they had to think the question of the Person of Jesus out into speculative form. The Jews never could have done this. They would never have reached the profound doctrine of the Holy Trinity. On Greek soil the whole Christological question was threshed out with all sorts of views which later on were found to be heretical, as to the person of Christ—Arianism, Sabellianism, all forms of Docetism and Apollinarianism and Nestorianism till the Œcumenical Council of Bishops, at Nicea A. D. 325, with the unbaptized Emperor Constantine holding the whip handle over it, in the interests of the state. Here was framed the first form of a Catholic Symbol or creed. Forged as it was—and the emperor commanded them to forge a Catholic creed—forged in the fire of fierce controversy, as the heated manifesto of a numerical majority; disgraced, as most of such councils were, with more tumult, violence and trickery than appears in any modern ecclesiastical or, perhaps, any political council, it succeeded in doing the needed work for thought in framing a Catholic Creed. We can see a real development of doctrine through the whole Nicene period. This creed cannot be repeated understandingly in its central parts by any one not familiar with the terminology of all the Christological controversies. For most it must be a sacrosanct symbol to be used best in councils of learned clergymen, but good to be said or sung on all high festivals of the church.



For a thinking man, in the Greek sense of philosophic thinking, it deservedly stands on its intrinsic merits. I have elsewhere given such appreciation of its worth that I need not further cumber these pages by giving reasons for my thankful acceptance of this form of sound doctrine, a veritable charter of *comprehension* and also of *freedom*. Its Christology and its doctrine of the Holy Trinity, are nearly ultimate for my thinking.

I should accept it on its intrinsic merits even if it had been framed by the provincial council of the *General Assembly of Westminster Divines*. I could do no better if I formed a council of one and essayed to work out a doctrine of the person of Christ myself. The clause "who proceeded from the Father" had the addition made "and from the Son" in a later, non-ecumenical council and caused the schism of the whole Eastern (Greek) church. I think that the addition was correct and necessary.

But let us note how it is a charter of *freedom* as regards any non-ecumenical dogmas. Supposing that we can accept the Nicene creed as Catholic dogma, how then shall we regard all other forms of doctrinal teachings of the church? We may regard them all as relative. Take the Augustinian system; take reformation theology; take the so-called catholic theology; take New England orthodoxy—we may say of every one of them they are merely of relative authority. One should seek to understand how they came about and how they expressed the mind of their several generations, and so give them due historical appreciation, and then put them in some theological museum for safe-keeping and inspection. Suppose that one has not the time for such study; suppose that a church puts any one of them before him for acceptance as authoritative, what is he to do? Refuse assent; say frankly that he does not believe them in the way demanded. That is what



I should do. That is what I should advise others to do. They are not true Catholic dogma.

The Nicene creed, that charter of comprehension of dogma is also a charter of *freedom* as regards all other forms of doctrine. They should not be allowed to worry the soul of one trying to be a Christian. They are open questions. Thus this creed says nothing about when or how God created the world. How this ought to have saved the church from giving grounds for such a wholesome and needed book as that of Dr. Andrew D. White's "History of the Warfare of Science with Theology."

It says nothing about an infallible Bible. What theological warfares this might have saved us from! Nay even save us from now. It says nothing about *how* Christ saves us. Think of some of the immoral theories of the atonement—the earlier one of Christ being a ransom to the devil, tricked by the human form of an infinite divine victim: or that of His being literally a propitiatory offering to an offended Father (Anselm): or to His justice, as of substitutionary value. These were all attempts to rationalize *how* "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." In spite of these words of St. Paul, he himself was first among those to try to explain *how*. The creed says nothing about *how* we receive grace sacramentally. Think of the Roman theory and also of the too one-sided subjective theory of Protestants. It says nothing of predestination and foreordination. It says nothing about "*how* the dead are raised up and with what body do they come." St. Paul changed from his view in his first Epistle to the Thessolonians (A. D. 59). In his first Epistle to the Corinthians he says "thou fool" to one holding his own earlier view. It says we believe in "the life of the world to come," but says nothing about the state of those departed. Think of the nightmare of horror

cause by both Romanist and Protestant pictures of hell from which it might have saved many terror-stricken generations. This Catholic creed is a chapter of freedom on all these points. These conceptions are all dependent upon, and relative to, current world-views. As to the state of the departed wicked, I recall an incident in a classroom of a theological seminary. The professor was expounding the orthodox view on this subject and decrying universalism. He mentioned the name of a clergyman holding this heretical view and added that he had been deposed from the ministry. Well, I exclaimed, then they would better depose me before I am ordained, for I hope for the ultimate restoration of all the Father's sons. Then he explained that the clergyman had been deposed on the ground of immorality.

"O yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill.  
That not one life shall be destroyed  
Or cast as rubbish to the void  
When God hath made the pile complete."

This is a bit of nineteenth century optimism, somewhat chilled by the inhumanities in the great war. Pray for the final redemption of those German *military* fiends? Yes, I did pray for that, but for that accomplished through eons of fiercest purgatorial fire that might purge out their brutal qualities by Him who "always sits as a refiner and purifier of silver."

But it is fair to say that many modernists do not esteem this creed in the same way. They are, I think, too prone to flaunt philosophy and approach the whole subject in an inductive and pragmatic way. Thus Dr. Edwin Hatch of the University of Oxford laments the influence of Greek philosophy on Christian doctrine. "The bequest of it has

been a *damnosa hereditas*." "Even if it be considered a development of Christian doctrine, much of the Greek element may be abandoned." He does not have the speculative sense to appreciate it. But this is because he believes in Christianity as essentially a way of life. Cast off the emphasis on theology and return to the Sermon on the Mount, and Christianity may "stand out again before the world in the uncolored majesty of the Gospels." . . . Here he is right. He makes the difference between the Sermon on the Mount in the early days and the Nicene creed, in the fourth century the topic of his lectures.<sup>1</sup> . . . "Why an ethical sermon stood in the forefront of the teaching of Jesus Christ, and a metaphysical creed in the forefront of the Christianity of the fourth century, is a problem which claims investigation." He blames Greek philosophy for its *damnosa heritas*, in all dogmatic theology. We agree with him, as do all modernists, if it is a matter of emphasis. Dogma is subsidiary, often injurious to Christianity as a *way of life*.

So many modernists are restive under catholic dogma, as well as under provincial forms of doctrine. They do not have the speculative mind in their studies. The inductive and pragmatic methods appeal to them as strongly as the speculative method did to the Greeks. Why should they not use these modern methods?

Protestant modernists are free to look this dogmatic gift-horse in the mouth, and seek to attain the same results by other methods. They believe in progress in doctrine, and are in earnest to contribute to a more vital, and intelligible form for their day.

A new theology! No, they are not foolish enough to make one. That is still much in the making. Is change fatal? No change is bad for the old house. But no

<sup>1</sup> "The Hibbert Lectures for 1888," pp. 138-351.

change is also bad for the tenant. Dogma, primarily, means a plausible opinion. When communal, it gets official sanction. But it is still only opinion rather than knowledge. Look a moment at the psychological steps in the formation of dogmas. In childhood the religious mind is nourished on pictures, later on by picture-conceptions, then by abstract conceptions, dogmas, clear-cut definite opinions. Then comes the critical stage, ending either in agnosticism or in a more just appreciation of the place and worth of these dogmas. In the teens comes the necessary catechetical period for learning the doctrines of one's own church. Soon then comes the iconoclastic, puppy-dog period of delight in tearing everything into pieces. The youth is quite sure that all opinions, except his own, are foolish. None are infallible, not even the oldest. Later on he may doubt if even the opinions of the youngest are infallible. But he may be brought to see that all live things, nautilus-like, are in a process of development. He can read the history of dogma, at least, in the historical spirit. He sees that finality means sterility. He gives up his dream of infallibility. He lives and thinks freely in the changing order. He may be a bit impatient with the older parts of his castle. To present static forms, he may say, You change not, therefore you are dead, just as an old stand-patter may say, You change, therefore you are not true. Ultimately, as he comes to know the nature of all life and living institutions, he may accept his heritage with some modern improvements. He may become a stand-patter himself and romanticize into the old. Then he is not a modernist. But dogma of some kind he must have, even if it be that of his own making; even if it be only that of the ostracized agnostic, "I don't know and nobody else does," logically ending with a doubtful doubt about his own doubt. This



he scarcely ever reaches, but houses himself in his own dogmatic doubt. Dogma one must have to live.

Dogma is one of the necessary products of life. Life begets its intellectual house, its intellectual shell. It is naturally very conservative. Conservatism should be stronger than the radical element in all institutions, that they may do their best work; cultivate the soil best. Intellectual nomads cultivate no soil. It has been said that it is better for a state to abide with many bad laws, rather than to be forever changing. There is partial truth in this. Change must and does come. But it should come slowly to meet the needs of changing times. First the old, then the new in and with the old. That is the way with the English Common Law, a more natural one, perchance, than that of the American Constitution with its increasing number of amendments. This is not quite as radical as the darning an old stocking till the old part is gone, and a wholly new one is left. In English Law, if a court gives an adverse decision for the plaintiff, an appeal can be taken to show that it is not in accordance with fundamental right or justice. If this is sustained before the eyes of reason, the court will reverse its decision. Thus its Common Law progresses. Equity, which Aristotle defined as a higher kind of justice, prevails over any legal form of justice. It applies "the leaden rule that is used in Lesbian architecture,"<sup>1</sup> not a rigid but a flexible one, adapting itself to the unevenness of the shape of the stones.

But the church is more conservative than the state. Besides the religious emotions cling to sacrosanct phrases and dogmas. Continual change of, or tinkering at, these static forms shakes and loosens the tendrils of the clinging vine; weakens the faith in and the love and loyalty to the mother.

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle's "Ethics" Bk. V. C. XIV, and his "Rhetoric" 1. XIII.



Yes, many say, keep the form of these sacrosanct phrases and dogmas, as we do an old pair of shoes. They are so comfortable. To go slow here is the wisdom of conservatism. The heaven is still working in what sometimes seems to be putrid dough. The mood of progress is at least unpleasant to stand-patters. For it points out all the uncouthness and deficiencies, all the faults, follies and crimes of the old. Its eye scans a wider horizon. It sees possible new forms for life in the present, compared with which the forms of the old seem decayed and withered. It can say the old shibboleths with difficulty. Perforce it pours its new wine into the dry old skins to the bursting point and longs for that point to be reached. "Let the dead bury the dead." Perish the dead forms of a law-encrusted gospel. Forward with it in forms best fitted to meet the needs of this generation. Both conservative and radical are wrong. The conservative says, God was, and God worked in some places in the *past*. The radical says, God is *here* and *now*; present and working as really as He was *then* and *there*. Only he who can see the cunning of reason, the way of God in history, can abide quietly in the old, while working for the new. Genuine conservatism must have some of the mood of progress, for it knows that no living institution can keep living except by the rejuvenation that comes from meeting the changes of environment; by responding to the dominant ideas of new periods which give the dialect and framework for its experience, religious or otherwise, *e.g.*, the dominant idea to-day, of progress. The wise radical, must in turn, be the heir of all the ages, must believe that "through all the ages one increasing purpose runs."

But when the crisis comes; when a great historic turning point comes; when the sorrows of travail come, then, as history shows, a Luther rather than a genuinely conser-

vative Erasmus, is needed, to build the more stately mansion.

A new theology to-day? There have been many systems of theology in past ages that were new in their day—new at least in very many of their points. Sometimes older views were molded into broader forms. Sometimes quite new views were introduced, but always in connection with and with reference to older views. These have generally been the work of individuals of great intellectual power, men like Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Arminius and, in this country, Jonathan Edwards and the other New England orthodox theologians—Bellamy, Shedd, Hopkins, Taylor, Bushnell, Finney, and Parks, till orthodoxy collapsed about A. D. 1880. Since that time the new school of theologians in Congregationalism has flourished on the ruins of the old. This process was much aided by the intellectual Unitarians. Doubtless the old orthodoxy looked on it as the *advocatus diaboli*. But it did a good and a needed work. To-day we find among clergy and laity many who are really tri-theists instead of being Nicene Trinitarians—the Latin term *persona* being an unfortunate and very imperfect and misleading translation of the Greek term used in the creed—*ὑπόστασις*.

All this is too academical for the purpose of this book. But for the trained theologians the New theology must go on within the last convolution of the last shell of its nautilus-like theology. The new wine must be poured into the old bottles as Jesus poured His new truth into those of Judaism till they fairly broke.

A second Augustine, Aquinas or Calvin, has not yet appeared in the church. But for the great majority the new work must go on through and out of current *provincial* dogmas. The cry for this is honest and clamorous to-day.

Modernists cannot bring themselves into harmony with the old, which speaks to them in dialects relatively obsolete. Time and thought will ultimately do the work. Dust will settle—has already settled over the tomes of old dogmatic theories. The age is seething and bubbling, nay boiling, in the new work, with non-conforming thought and conscience, within, as well as without the church. This work must be largely critical and largely radical and not an agreeable one. The constructive work also goes on. New conceptions are being formed and proclaimed. But the work is withstood by the ultra-conservative element in most churches, chiefly in the ranks of their clergy, and comes up against what has been characterized as the *clerical mind*. The clergy are naturally conservative of the old. Then they have vested interests in it.

First it was Bishops in General Councils, since then it has been the clergy in provincial councils, and sometimes in councils of the lone self, that have been dogma makers. But the clerical mind is monocular, biased and partisan. It needs to be supplemented more with the mind and the wider vision of the laity, if progress is to be made. The clerical mind, I let it go with a quotation: "By clericalism," says Canon Freemantle,<sup>1</sup> "I understand the system which unduly exalts the clerical office, and the function of public worship, so as to draw away the sense of divine agency and appointment from other offices and other functions. This tendency is not really one that exalts the church. It exalts the clergy alone; it dwarfs and emasculates the church."

Give the laity more voice. Let the church hear their serious, earnest, wistful desire, too often repressed in their loyal conformity, for a new dialect in doctrinal conceptions. The hope of the church is with the elite of the laity,

<sup>1</sup> "Bampton Lectures for 1883," p. 364.

nurtured in the new learning. Through them largely the constructive process goes on and a new dialect is being formed. The new learning brings forth new metaphors, new conceptions. It sees the old faith in new light, receives it in harmony with the changed conditions of modern science and culture. Only on her own peril can the church excommunicate herself from the larger life and learning and vision of modernists. The most deadening of all heresies is that which restricts truth to the exclusively clerical mind, or even to that of good minds in ages past. We have found the bones of the giants of old, and found them to be no larger than our own. Let us dare to work in their spirit. Many of them are found to be an inspiration, but let none of their conceptions weigh on us as an incubus. Their duty is our duty. See as best we can with our modern eyes, as they saw with their then modern eyes. Woe is me and woe to the church, if the Christianity of Christ be not larger and richer than any of its formulations. Dare to form new ones, temporary but vital for the needs of the new age. Let the process of change go on. Let the church be at least patient with the pioneers. But she must be more. She must be the church learning (*ecclesia discens*) if she would be the church teaching (*ecclesia docens*) to this age in the matter of Christian conceptions. She must integrate all the new learning with the old and sometimes supplant the old with the new, if she would be an inspiring teacher of those who have, pedagogically, passed beyond the catechetical period, out of the Sunday school into the church. And her Sunday schools should be primarily for teaching the simple Gospel story, and then for the dogmatic teachings of the church.

Let modernists go on freely forming new conceptions, and frankly giving them utterance. They may thus help to create a modern atmosphere around those who are either



loyally or lazily conforming to the old. The danger of modernists is that of *premature* dogmatism, of puppyism not yet come to maturity. We are none of us infallible, not even the youngest. But infallibility is never in order in this sphere of relativity. What is best relative to our own times and needs is all that can be urged here. Let men remember that the over emphasis of dogma has been the bane of Rome and of Geneva, and beware of like dogmatic over emphasis themselves. Let them, too, be patient and not lightly hurt devout souls, for of such is the kingdom of God. Let them take more time for the study of old forms that they may have a truly historical and religious appreciation of them; of what they meant for the ages in which they were formed and of how they met the needs of their days. Lack of this is also one of the intellectual and religious sins of modernists. They fail to read the way of God in the history of the mind making dogmas. They see only a scene strewn with dead forms. Dogmas are never dead born. The old ones were as vital in their days as new ones are now. God is in history as well as in the present. Either that or there is no God. If so, all thinking is a delusion—it may all be of the devil and thought be his tool. Much of the crudity and incompleteness in traditional forms is made more tolerable when one tries to see them in their historical environment.

Many minds remain geocentric. Many heliocentric minds are often geocentric in their dialects. "The sun (our sun) do rise." All others have set. "The sun rises and sets," "yours truly," and other polite terms, the modernist must often use when conforming to some outworn forms in public worship. Thus the Augustinian theology implied in the opening exhortation of the office of Baptism of children may choke in the mouth of the minister, as he repeats it. He would sooner omit it and pass at once to



the sweet words of Jesus in the Gospel that follows. Other outgrown words in the public services, he knows that the mind of the church herself has encysted or that she takes them *cum grano salis*. Take the word *satisfaction* in the Communion office. That is a definite term in St. Anselm's theory of the atonement as a satisfaction to the divine honor. It ought to be dropped. It is only encysted in the thought of the church. It is a post-Nicene and pre-modern conception. Or take the word *propitiation* in a verse quoted from St. John. The sense in which it was meant to be taken by those who put it into the Communion service was wholly the pagan idea of propitiating an angry Deity. St. John knew no such a Deity. His God was Love and Light. Better drop that verse from St. John's Epistle of love than to keep it as conveying the pagan notion of propitiating an offended Deity.

As for the creeds, I deprecate any mutilation or re-editing them on many grounds, as I would deprecate the total remodeling of a fine old castle into a modern palace. They are works of religious art, and should be preserved intact. Keep them in the services of the church. Put them in the background when you come to the office of admitting new members. Here we may plead for a simpler one. It is needed for the many adults whom we should fain gladly receive and who would gladly enter if a simpler creed should be demanded for their acceptance. Let me suggest one tentatively, such as I should like to use in presenting adults for confirmation——

I believe in the Father of all; and in Jesus the revealer of God and the Saviour of men. I believe in the life-giving spirit; in the fellowship of the children of God; in the forgiveness of sins, the victory of love, and the life eternal. Amen.

## CHAPTER V

### A PERSONAL CONFESSION

**A**FTER writing the preceding chapter on Doctrine, I find myself asking: after all, what is the comparative worth of doctrine in nurturing the Christian life? I think that I can best answer this from personal experience. As to traditional orthodoxy, I was born and bred in it. In college the usual skeptical spirit possessed me. In the seminary I had to fight my way back into orthodoxy, almost through bloody sweat. I succeeded. In my academical life philosophy took me to its deepest foundations, and I became a Nicene theologian. In later religious experience and work it all seemed to fall away—not disbelieved—but seemingly irrelevant, so that orthodoxy passed in music out of sight. I still hold the Nicene Christology intellectually. But I have no use for it to cultivate the religious life in myself or in others. I find like other modernists, that the inductive and pragmatic methods yield me better spiritual food and also appeal much more directly and fruitfully in leading others to the Master.

Doctrines about Him are not very greatly ministrant in this matter. Personally I regret, in later life, the time and wrestlings I gave to theories about Jesus. That was because I had been bred to think that right belief was essential to salvation. If I am now asked whether doctrines quicken my spiritual pulse and enhance my worship and work, I am compelled to say that they do not. So I decline to put the old emphasis upon creeds and doctrines

when trying to turn souls from themselves to Jesus and His way of life; to reconcile them to God through Jesus and to incline them to practical working for His Kingdom in all the spheres of life. I only endeavor to get the little circle over which my influence extends to try to follow His footsteps and in His way of life. I sometimes wonder that people who are not thoroughly educated put so much emphasis on doctrine. This is largely due to the over emphasis put upon orthodoxy by the church and clergy. This produces bigoted zealots. It is divisive of Christian fellowship. One reads of the fanaticism, the hatreds, persecutions, and wars that have been its unchristian fruitage in many ages of the church. To-day, however, doctrines do not appeal enough to men to fight about. Time and experience and education has rather made them outgrown. Earnest men in all churches are saying, Let us put them aside for the time with all the disputations and doubts they cause. Let us try to get back to Jesus of the Gospels, and to live as He would have us live. Let us have something that will have more influence in shaping our lives than have traditional doctrines about Him. Of course men cannot help thinking about Him. They may learn what men in other ages thought about Him. But that requires memory, not thought. It is helpful, of course, to go back through the nineteen centuries of Christological speculation. But it is fatal to both life and thought if we tarry in any one of them, unless we go back to Jesus and then think afresh, through them all, about Jesus. That will give us vital doctrines. Back to Jesus for life and forward with Him to doctrines about Him: at least freshen up the old doctrines and perhaps aid in forming a new theology.

For forms of doctrine let bigots fight. The Christian cannot be wrong who is following in His most blessed footsteps, which were not in the ways of the doctrinal scribes

and pharisees of his day. But you may rightly ask how I present the new in the old in my teaching and preaching. Let me try to sketch my way in this matter.

Talking with honest skeptics, I always try to appreciate their difficulties, of which I ask for a frank statement. Often with cultured people this leads into philosophy. The fundamental question here is that of idealism as against materialism or, say, against the mechanical scientific conception of the universe and the resulting religious agnosticism. Here I am so thoroughly a trained philosophical idealist, that I find little trouble in vindicating it. But then comes their doubt about the doctrines of the church. Here too I ask for a frank statement of their difficulty in swallowing them.

Then I try to give the modern view of church doctrine and Bible to relieve them of difficulties arising wholly from the old views. Then the modern view of orthodoxy, so that questions as to total depravity, theories of the atonement, and the state of the departed need not trouble them. I try to give the historical view of the origin of all such provincial theological doctrines which the men of past generations, seeing through their then modern eyes framed, many of them now obnoxious. Finally I try to lead them back to Jesus of the Gospels, as seen through the work of modern Biblical criticism, showing them that honest criticism is always constructive. Through all the ecclesiastical and theological pictures of the Master I say, go back to the Master Himself, as living and teaching and working in Judea; back to Jesus and see Him *re-achieving* the Divinity He had before His real incarnation; back to Him and to the salvation for men which He sought and for which His life and death sacrifice were so freely given. Recognize that His idea of salvation was that of getting His mind and spirit into the hearts of



men, that they also might labor better for His one chief mission,—the advancing of the Kingdom of God on earth. Study the Gospel portrait of Him first and chiefly. Then I ask, can you not take Him as your loving friend, teacher, master, leading you to a higher life? Will you say that of all mankind you will cleave to Him always? Will you dedicate your life to His service? Then what doth hinder? Arise and be baptized. Enter the church and use all her means for further edification in life and doctrine. And no church should ask more for the admission of new disciples. Jesus asked even less. Let her trust that one who can only say: "Jesus most divine, when most human thou art" is at least on his way to a fuller conception of his Divinity. Trust him in his stage of Jesusolatry. Let him get love and loyalty to Jesus and he is on his way to the Christ of the creeds.

Again, you may rightly ask how I preach to my own flock—what message do I give it?

When after thirty years of academical life and after a new and real evangelical sort of conversion, I re-entered the active work of the ministry, I took this text: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Jesus Christ." Phil. ii:5. And that has been the burden of my message ever since. The same mind, the mind of the Master in us, His spirit motivating all our conduct—that is the only salvation of soul, here or hereafter. We are saved just so far as we are thus saved by Him. And we have so little of His spirit now. We need more of the spirit of the Evangelical party—the passionate, constraining love of the Master, begotten in us by His passionate love for us. Back with them to Jesus for our religion. Ofttimes the Evangelicals went back chiefly to His Apostles for doctrine. Let us live more with His Gospels; study them more and with equal devoutness. But not back



with the Evangelicals to their scholastic schemes of doctrine; their intellectual "plans of salvation" and straight-jacket formulas and party shibboleths. Loosen the bands they put around the Bible. Cast off their doctrine of the plenary inspiration of every word and letter in all parts of it. Take the Bible as we now know it to be, as containing the word of God as received by men of other ages, under the historical limitations of their times and education and their general and differing world-views. Take it as we now know it to be, as containing the religious *Belles Lettres* of the Hebrews and the early Christians. Take the Old Testament as containing much that is not religious literature—with much that is pure folklore and exaggerated tribal history or legend. The old doctrine about the Bible is not true. We should not dare to teach it to our children; to teach or imply it in teaching them in our Sunday schools. We should allow them to read only parts of the Old Testament and those always with intelligent interpretation. Then their Anselmic theory of the atonement; of sin and salvation, of heaven and hell, will surely be obsolete.

As to the life of the departed, I have preached as follows: But how best conceive of the *plus ultra*—the more beyond? How best realize what heaven means? Men are forever making pictures of that which is unpicturable—because it is super-picturable, "beyond compare" with things of time and space. And then, as they grow in knowledge and spiritual life, they are forever casting away the old pictures. That is good and proper as long as it does not also cast away the faith in that for which their old pictures stood. That for which these always stand is the Kingdom; the family of God for His children—the *plus ultra* of death. If you were to ask for the most generic belief about the character of the future life for sons of

men, I should answer that it is the same that I have for the end and purpose of this life: and that is the further education and discipline of the sons of men into the image of the Master—into sons of God.

Dante pictures in local coloring, the various grades in this future school. He gives eight grades in the *Purgatorio* for the purging out of sin and nine grades in the *Paradiso* for further education and refinement. Through all these circles the Divine Pedagogue is drawing His children into mystic union with Himself in the tenth circle—the highest heaven. Education! That is the essential meaning of the doctrine of the intermediate state of the departed.

And the *intermediate state*, the intermediate school, that is the highest that the vast majority of us will be fitted to enter, so slow has been our progress in His school here below. Our death day will usher us into the new world, just as we are. But it will still be in the Father's universe, somehow, if not somewhere, in His larger universe of 'all things visible and invisible.' We shall enter it with the same characters with which we leave this school, with something far more rich and personal than *Karma*. We shall need further education and further remedial punishment, or purging. Why not give this intermediate state the name of *Purgatory*? It has bad and repulsive associations. That we must admit. But it is a good term. It is a state for refining and purifying. Few of us shall be fitted to enter heaven; few are the saints, the pure in heart who shall see God. That will take a long course of education and purgation for the most of us.

Again, we are social beings here. Our characters here depend upon our social relations. So we think that that future school is a *social state*. The apostle speaks of the whole family in heaven and earth. When our Saviour was comforting His disciples in His last day with them on

earth He said: "Let not your hearts be troubled. . . . In my Father's house are many mansions"—that is many homes. The same holy, social bonds that unite men here; the tender ties that constitute a family here; the friendships, and the schooling together in all social circles, will doubtless continue there in higher and nobler forms. How empty and cheerless heaven would seem without the personal presence there of our elder brother Jesus Christ, and without the welcoming presence of our dear departed relatives and friends and brothers. Without this social element, and reunion with friends, heaven would never seem attractive enough to ever make us *home-sick* for it.

You know the story of the heathen Goth who came to a missionary to be baptized that he might go to heaven. He asked the missionary where his ancestors and where his dead children were. As baptism was held to be necessary to salvation, he was told that they were in hell. Then, said the noble Goth, I won't be baptized. When I die, I want to go where they are.

But in my Father's house there are many mansions, many homes, many schools.

Between a pious mother and a wicked son in the same house here on earth there is often an impassable gulf, at least for the son. The mother's love makes the pass. Good scholars and unruly bad ones may be in the same school-room there as here. Again, to continue an annual theme on All Souls' day in All Souls' Church, can we pray for the departed? If we have prayed for them here how can we cease to pray for them there? The vivid sense that the early Christians had of the communion of saints—the belief that the dead like the living, were still living members of Christ's Church—made it impossible for them

to pray for the one without also praying for the other. Here is an old epitaph:

“Here lies the body of David Elginbrod,  
Hae mercy on his soul, Lord God,  
As I wad do, were I Lord God,  
And Thou wert David Elginbrod.”

That expresses a genuinely human cry of the soul. Have mercy on my soul, here and hereafter. Have mercy on the souls of my departed loved ones, as I would were I Lord God. The prophet Ezekiel says, “All souls are mine, saith the Lord.”

All souls are God’s here and hereafter, now and forever—whether home-staying sons, or prodigal sons to be drawn back into the Father’s house. That is the eternal Christian hope and prayer. To the modern Christian the old doctrine that death ends all probation and that everlasting torment awaits the majority of men, is inconceivably blasphemous. Tennyson’s well known lines express the modern view:

“Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,  
He thinks he was not made to die:  
And thou hast made him: Thou art just.”

Lord, grant that light perpetual may shine upon them and give them peace and joy and rest and further discipline and service in Thy kingdom beyond, through our elder brother, our Master, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

I don’t preach many doctrinal sermons. When I do, it is Nicene theology on Trinity Sunday; at Christmas the

real incarnation of the *Logos* in the infant Jesus who "increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." Then through Lent, how "he learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. v:8). How he was, in all points, "tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv:15). How He suffered agony in Gethsemane; how He made the supreme sacrifice on Good Friday; how He reached divinity (Phil. ii:9) through all his service of love for us loveless men; how He rose again and opened the gate of everlasting life for us on Easter; how He completed the return process of excarnation at the Ascension.

As to any provincial theology, though imbedded in some of our services why not treat it as we treat the Fourth Commandment. Though clad in Hebrew clothes, we mentally say we mean the Lord's Day, before we ask God to "incline our hearts to keep this law."

I try sometimes to explain the outgrown form; try to fill it with the new meaning. Often I say of some heterodox form of orthodoxy, pass it by if it worries you. Then I direct attention to duties such as these: "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is" (Heb. x:25), or more now than then. Come to the church. You need a sabbath for your soul. Enter and try to feel that "The Lord is in His Holy temple and let all the earth keep silence before Him." Join in the services of uplift from the world. Frequent the Lord's Table. Invite His presence, and He enters as Host. And do not forget, before partaking of the most holy food, to join in heart with the minister as he says: "And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto Thee," that so we may be "made one body with Him, that He may dwell in us, and we in Him." So too in Baptism, "remembering al-



ways that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ and to be made like unto Him; that as He died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized die from sin and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."

Finally come to our week-day service of silence and meditation. Come for rest and refreshment and poise and power needed so much in the hurly-burly of our modern over-strenuous activity for meat and drink, for money and pleasure. "Be still and know God." Then I urge a return to the good old way of living much with the Bible. Give much time to the devout study of the Gospels. See Jesus of Judea till you love Him as teacher and master and saviour of the world. In all ways cultivate the devout life that so the peace of God, which passeth all human understanding, may come and abide with you in all the battle and burden of life. Something like this has been the message of a modernist in the pulpit.

Truth comes to us in earthen vessels, in codes, creeds, cults and institutions. The bottom seems to be dropping out of many of them to-day. It has dropped out of many forms in the past, when the spirit of an epochal age found the old forms to be obsolete. It is the general spirit of our modern age that is knocking the bottom out of many good old forms. And what are we doing to meet this condition of many minds? You, very nonchalantly, dismiss the claims of reason, Bible and church, from their seats of infallible authorities,—knock the bottom out of them all. Is not this agnosticism? If not, what do you give as their unbreakable bottom and so, their authority? This fair question may be answered in this way.

Speculative reason carries the mind back either to a

Supreme Reason or a supreme unreason. I know that it carries back to the former as the First Principle—to a Personal Reason—God. There are many other ways in which men attain to some belief in some sort of a God.

The kinship of God and man is a fundamental fact—part of man's nature. So man is by nature a religious being. In the mystic depths of his consciousness there lies, often overlaid and smothered by other interests, the instinct to worship. It depends not upon intellectual proof. That at best gives form to his *feeling* of God. And that is fundamental.

Starting with the speculative attainment what has reason, a God-given faculty to do, but to trace God's footsteps, not only in the laws of nature—the laws of the immanent divine—but also in the history of mankind, especially in that of all educative institutions through which the process of the progress of the race has gone on? How have these institutions served their function of promoting the welfare of the race? First, how has any one of them—say the church—done this in ages past and then how is it doing this now? Its authority rests on our answer to that. The vital faith once delivered in Judea has been given afresh time after time. Can we not trace a continuity rather than an *identity* in these various forms? Why seek for identity. Nothing living is ever identical with its past. Life grows.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new;  
And God fulfils himself in many ways  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”

It is possible to trace continuity and progress in the process.

The necessity for institutions can easily be demonstrated.

So too, can the necessity of their changing, unless they perish in ceasing to fulfil their functions. An institution may rise, ripen, and rot. But those of family, church, and state have always had sufficient vitality to recover even from a state that seems like rottenness. They are *jure divino*. They minister to the welfare of the race. That gives them their rightful authority in all their changing forms. Is not that sufficient?

The wise man accepts the whole historic process of an institution in the historical spirit and in the spirit of the Fifth Commandment. But at the same time he will labor to make that institution function for present needs fully as well as it did for those of other times and conditions. He will be an enlightened modernist. This is the way people treat their political institutions; the wise way the English people treat their Common Law, full as it is, of obsolete customs, anachronisms and defects. It is the wise way for Christians to treat their church.

A vastly larger knowledge of the history of both church and state has been attained in modern times. How are we to interpret this history to-day? Two interpretations are possible—that of a blind, purposeless physical evolution, and that of the progressive revelation of God made to man, as he discovers His footprints. This is a question for philosophy, a question between idealists and materialists.

“A fire mist and a planet,  
A crystal and a cell,  
A jelly fish and a saurian,  
And caves where cave men dwell:  
Then a sense of law and beauty,  
And a face turned from the clod,—  
Some call it Evolution,  
And others call it God.”

"A man's a man for a' that"—a man in spite of his descent from a beast. His upward look has made it an ascent. He traces his true descent from God. He is being made after His image and likeness, through the education and training of His institutions. Any institution is what it has become. Its authority at any time is that of ministrant service. This conception forbids both the reaffirmation and the denial of its past. It forbids any uncritical acceptance of past forms of life as final and authoritative, as well as the undue glorification of the present stage of the institution. Every institution that grows is as full of the future as it is laden with the past. But the golden age is in the future, not in the past, or present. The Gospel transcends the law—fulfils it. But truth is not given like a shot out of a pistol. It is done into man through moralizing institutions. The Ten Commandments had been thus worked into the social experience of men before they were given out on Mount Sinai. Thus the Lord had said for ages. They were for the good of mankind. That gave them their authority. Most modernists are wise enough to accept an institution laden with its past. Some are otherwise. But such are really belated denizens of the "vulgar rationalism of the Eighteenth Century." Then reason, Bible, and church were conceived of in static form. Then reason became iconoclastic. There was no conception of development of institutions. They were mercilessly criticized. Criticism was decidedly destructive. The historical method frees one from such iconoclasm. It restores appreciation and authority to human institutions in spite of their patent defects. It is this spirit that appreciates the whole history of the church, and of the Bible and gives them their proper authority.

"Thus saith the Lord," has been continuous with devel-

oping forms, as men have been able to discover more and more of His revelation to them.

What further can a modernist say on fundamental Christian conceptions? Let me mention briefly a few of the points. God! "What is God like?" That was the form of the question blurted out by a wounded officer to whom an army chaplain was ministering—a cry from the depth of an anguished soul.



## CHAPTER VI

### WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

**G**OD! Who dares name Him? Back of the names wherewith men of all religions have named Him, there has been the feeling of the unnamable One. We name God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But even in the creeds there is a hint that this is only the way we know Him; the way we have discovered Him through His revelation of Himself to us. We cannot say that this exhausts the fullness of His being. Philosophy has worked on this question and answered, in Eastern speculation, the One is the impersonal, unnamable substance of all things, giving an impersonal pantheism. In Western speculation, it has answered, He is the personal Subject, the transcendant eternal Thought or Self-consciousness, in whose very nature lies the self-necessitated motive to continuous creation and revelation. This gives two things (1) a doctrine of His triune nature, from the analysis of His Self-consciousness, preparing the way for the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and (2) a doctrine of the divine immanence. But the Absolute of philosophy is not identical with the God of religion. Religion is quite secondarily intellectual. It reaches and touches God in quite other ways.

The *religious* ways of *knowing* God can be vindicated by a *theory* of religious knowledge as valid as that of the speculative way. But this is beyond our present purpose. What is God like? asks the religious mind. What *mental* image can we make of Him? Some sort of knowledge is

implicit in the simplest religious experience. This is followed through a long course of experience till knowledge is transcended in the mystical vision of the pure in heart and in mystical union with Him. But the religious mind cannot live without trying to form an answer to the question: "What is God like?" Generally it works, like other forms of knowledge, in the realm of relativity; of picture thoughts, of frozen metaphors, of stereotyped general conceptions, whence proceed its dogmas. Let it be granted that this sort of knowledge is inadequate to the rich experience of God that comes in other and more vital ways to the heart and mind.

Take the religious relation—that which binds man to God—as a part of the full nature of man as man. Grant, then, that man's thought about God is conditioned by his stage of culture at any given time, and we can trace a growth in the spirituality and intellectuality of the conception of God in all vital religions. Let us grant that the religious mind is naturally anthropomorphic, not forgetting the theomorphic side of man's nature. Then we may say that an honest, just, merciful, Fatherly God, is the noblest work of thinking man.

The second commandment forbids the making of any graven image or likeness of God. But *mental* images the religious mind must make, always does make. Anthropomorphic conceptions always contain a *super*-anthropomorphic element. Even the graven image of the idolator is always more than the image. It contains a *super*-image worth for him. Again, along with the mental process of making God in the likeness of man, there goes the process of making Him *out of* the likeness of man; the process of de-anthropomorphizing his mental picture of God, as he proceeds in general culture.

But in the work-a-day world of practical religion, let us study how we can best conceive God to-day under the

changed conditions of modern culture—a convenient term for housing the results of mind's conquests in the last century. The history of many other religions may be best studied in the light of a gradual purification and elevation of their conceptions of God. So may that of Christianity. It has been going on through the Christian centuries. And we may trace the same process in our own religious conceptions.

What is God like? That depends upon who we are, and at what period of life and culture we are, at the time of uttering it. Here we may notice the dialectic at work at home. We begin at the conceptions of God held by the most superstitious heathen and follow along through the higher forms of the world-religions, criticizing and refusing to accept any of their conceptions of God as adequate or worthy. We continue the examination of the Christian conception of God in different epochs of time and culture, still criticizing current conceptions. We criticize the conceptions of God that many of our fellow Christians about us have. We find every phase of heresy repeating itself in common conceptions of God. We criticize our own conceptions. From the mother's knee to the dying couch we are transforming or replacing imperfect conceptions about God by more worthy ones. We acknowledge that our highest conception only faintly adumbrates and suggests the inexpressible Infinite and Absolute.

With good men it is the same holy spirit in us, urging on to a wider vision, up loftier mounts and into deeper communion. It is the same spirit co-working with our spirit, as we realize the imperfection of our attainment and expression of spiritual knowledge. Iconoclastic criticism of outworn conceptions is a perfectly normal activity. So, too, is the further work of replacing them by new ones that are more in touch with current conceptions in other departments of mental activity. This is true in other fields

of thought. Fairy tale and folk-lore give the child its conceptions of history at first. Dogmatic teaching of history transforms them. Poetry and works of the higher imagination carry these outgrown conceptions into higher and wider vision.

The child's conceptions of earth, and sky, and sea are transformed and widened by the study of the exact sciences. Again, mechanical conceptions employed in these sciences are seen to be as mythological as those of religions, as "the fantastic exaggerations of an incomplete perception" (Mach) or as the idols of a groundless metaphysic, useful but not final (Comte). It is all a matter of psychology. "When I was a child, I understood as a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." The whole process is the way the mind works.

Let any one recall the conception of God that he had at five years of age, then that at ten, then that of his teens, then that of early manhood, and so on till mature age. How his conception, his mental image, of God has changed. We may smile as we recall our early and vital ones. But they were upward steps of the spirit. Some minds cling to those given and formed in the catechetical period. Others break them up in a skeptical period, and declining the further task of forming new and better ones, remain at the skeptical point for the rest of their lives. Earnest souls hear the impelling cry, "Thou hast destroyed it. Build it again." Earnest souls go on and upward, idealizing old forms, tacitly stripping them of their grosser import till more worthy ones are formed. God as "an exaggerated man," exaggerated by attaching the attribute of infinity to human attributes, serves for a standpoint for a while. But "the greater Me in me" keeps driving us on, till we can no longer give any meaning to such infinitized human conceptions. We cannot ascribe literal eyes or ears



or wrath to God. He is above and more than any such human attributes. He is a living God, "in whom we live and move and have our being," no longer wholly a separate object. Laplace was right when he said that he had swept the heavens with his telescope and found no such object among or above the other objects. So we become symbolists as regards our picture conceptions of what God is like. They still suggest and urge farther on till our dying hour. But if we are earnest souls, we find no cause of agnostic skepticism. We see God darkly, it may be, but we have felt His unspeakable presence, and we have formed the best possible conceptions of Him that nourish our souls. Around us and in us lives a greater than us.

But then we should have to validate the conceptions of people in all religions. Yes! surely in those of the Greeks and Persians, and others, as well as those of early Jews. Christianity need not be envious. Our God is not. The self-same spirit has been co-working with all His human children in all stages of culture in every age of the world. Any other view is skeptical. In all forms of experience, God has been making revelation of Himself to them. Subjectively, revelation is a process of discovery. Take a devout mature Christian. Let him trace how his idea of God has been changed by his enlarging experience. A great bereavement or a great joy comes to him, and his idea of God is enlarged. A Lisbon earthquake or an Oriental famine; sword and pestilence; the unthinkable horrors of a great war, all the experiences he lives through, or even only hears of—all these change his conception of what God is like. His God is enlarged to take in all his experience. God is always given—sometimes in our feeling of dependence, sometimes in the sense of the infinite, sometimes in the mystic sense of His presence in us and encompassing us. "The hound of heaven" follows us



"With unhurrying chase  
And unperturbèd pace.

\* \* \* \* \*

Halts by me that footfall:  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
I am He whom thou seekest.  
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

But is this all that a Christian can say? We may say that God reveals Himself through one's experiences in life. But I am a social being. God reveals himself through others; not only through the experience of the race and through our social experience, but through the great light that shines through great and holy men. To see the peace and joy, the calm and the energy in some good man, is to have a vision of what God is like. That was the impression Jesus made upon his disciples in Judea and upon his disciples in all countries and ages.

To see Jesus is to see what God is like. He was like God: God incarnate in human form, and under all human limitations. "I, and my Father are one," and may all these be one in us, "as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee." That was his abiding consciousness and his constant prayer. In the life, character and work of Jesus, we best see what God is like. Here conception is replaced by more concrete perception. See God in the ineffable face of Jesus of Nazareth, and it becomes an abiding and an ineffaceable likeness of God, with all its natural and logical implications of his pre-incarnate "form of God" and of his post-incarnate life with the Father. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

Any earnest man who cannot rise to the speculative knowledge of God as the triune absolute, nay, all men can

best see in Jesus what God is like. Skeptics may ridicule many of our conceptions of God. But before the face of Jesus—"the white man" of the doughboys—the perfect man, they will bow the knee. Back to Jesus for our religion, back to Him for our best conception of what God is like. See His face and live His life as He manifestly intended that His disciples should do. That is the best substance of the matter. And that is the work in which modernists in religion are earnestly and intensely interested.

See the face of Jesus! But *which* face of Him, you may rightly ask. There have been so many portraits offered during the different ages of the church. He has become a veritable protean Christ. The old sea god Proteus changed his forms in order to *elude* his pursuing suppliants. Not so Jesus. Though He did thus "appear in another form" to His disciples after his resurrection, it was always for the purpose of *self-revelation* in a higher but real form. The other protean forms have been made by men, as they have seen Him with vision distorted by their temporary world-views. The Jewish Messiah was the first portrait. The Greek *Logos* was the next; then Christ as a ransom to the devil; then Christ as a satisfaction to the injured honor of God; then as a propitiation to an angry Deity. Then the Christ as *vindictive judge*, as painted by Michelangelo on the wall above the altar in the Sistine chapel, devoid of beauty and tenderness and all winning and consolatory aspects—a Christ to be feared. Then we have the Christ of romance and the effeminate Christ; pictures of the ethical Christ; Christ as a great man; as the highest ethical man; Christ as high priest; Christ as king; and finally Christ as "prisoner of the tabernacle," the reserved materials of his memorial feast, worshiped by many as an idol is worshiped. Some feature of the face they all have caught but how many they have blurred. The words of Isaiah may rightly be recalled

as most applicable to them all: "His visage was so marred, more than that of any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah lii:14). "Our little systems," men's little Christ,

"They have their day and cease to be:  
They are but broken lights of Thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Christ the many-named, and yet no name adequate to name Him, who is "above every name that is named." And this is the impression He makes on any fair-minded student of the Gospel narratives who can see the local color given by the Jewish disciples some forty years after his leaving the earth. It is a universal human face. It surpasses all his painters in color or in words. The man surpasses all his biographers and they never tell the full story of his life—not even the Evangelists. They interpreted Him in their own dialect as a Jewish Messiah. The many-sidednesses of Jesus helps to account for the many varying portraits of the universal man. The other explanatory factor is the simple psychological fact that the mind receives the new in the web of old views. Men apperceive, with an already preformed organ of perception—the whole of their mental preconceptions and grooves of thought.

An old legend says: A painter came to Jesus whilst He was in the midst of the crowd and endeavored to portray Him, but failed because of the infinite way the expression of the face changed. It reflected constantly the faces of those in the crowd who had need of Him, and was not one face so much as five thousand in one. Jesus, therefore, took a towel and pressed it to His face, saying, "The portrait of Christ may not be drawn by hands lest at any time it should be said this and this only was Christ." And He gave to the painter the miraculous likeness imprinted on the towel, and then the further blessing: "Thou

couldst not paint my face, for the reflection there of the face of the common man. Behold, henceforth, thou shalt not attempt to paint the face of any common man, but thou shalt find my face there also."

Modernists may well study all the portraits of the Master. In many of them they will find lineaments of a face that inspires, uplifts, consoles, and energizes. In some of them they will see abhorrent and distorted features. One of these is that of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice to an outraged God—an attempt to explain how God is reconciled to man, instead of the truth that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." This repellent view still lingers in the formulas and symbols of many churches that have outgrown literalism and take it all symbolically. But the symbolism is that of paganism rather than even that of Judaism. And, at first, it was taken in all its crude literalism. It was what an English Archbishop calls "a reversion to the worst ideas of pagan sacrifice, savoring of the heathen temple and reeking with blood." Jesus Himself never thus conceived of Himself. Paganism painted this portrait of an unworthy abhorrent Christ. The Rev. S. D. McConnell styles it "the inhuman Christ,"<sup>1</sup> and makes trenchant criticism of this pagan portrait that still hovers as a symbol in our dogmas and liturgies. What gives its phraseology any semblance of truth and any vitality for Christian nurture is the truth of the spirit of self-sacrifice for the good of others. That was the spirit of the Master culminating in His death on the cross. The cross has become the most vital symbol of this spirit. That is the spirit of the Master that always wins. That is the spirit in saints and heroes, that we instinctively say is divine. He died for me! He gave his life for his country! The cross-bearing of the Master, the sacrifice of love for men—that may well be called the heart

<sup>1</sup>"Christ." S. D. McConnell. Macmillans, 1904.



of the Gospel; that may show us the heart of the Father. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." In the cross of Christ all Christians glory. His cross, His spirit of self-sacrifice has been the consolation and the incentive of all those called upon to tread the *via dolorosa*.

Is it any wonder, then, that you ask, which face of Jesus must we see to see what God is like? Is there not a more genuine one? Is it any wonder that modernists are saying, "Back to Jesus of Nazareth." Back to the vision of his face as depicted by loving disciples, in their oral traditions; in their *memorabilia* written for propaganda purposes. But better back through them to the Master, more clearly seen by the aid of modern Biblical criticism. God is like *this* Jesus in all his ethical and spiritual characteristics. Other faces of Him are partial, some of them caricatures.

It is Christ as a *divine official* that is given in all the theological theories of the atonement and "plans of salvation." Modernists feel that the theological Christ does not give us so winsome a Christ as the one portrayed in the Gospels. There we find scarcely a trace of officialism. That began with the writers of the Epistles, and developed through the thought of the Greeks and the political lives of the Romans. Our world-view is different from both of these. *A priori* speculations are supplanted by inductive and pragmatic methods. Imperialism is supplanted by democracy. We would fain have modern conceptions for our setting of Jesus of Nazareth. The traditional and largely the conventional portraits of the Master blur the sweet image of his face and deaden the tenderness of his touch, by a mechanical officialism that was far from his mind. "Sir! we would see Jesus," disrobed of the officialism of the theological machinery super-imposed upon Him by men of other world-views. We would see Him



clad in modern raiment, speaking to our day as He spoke so freely to the people of His own day on earth.

That, at least, is the program of modernists—to see that face as kith and kin with themselves and as kith and kin with God.

Jesus was first Judaized, then Hellenized and scholasticized into theologies. Jesus has been sacerdotalized into a magic worker. Jesus has been officialized into a new law-giver. Historical and critical investigations show how all of these forms that mark His face originated, and how much they have availed and still avail in keeping up homage to Him. They do not avail with most modernists. The fresh, vivid and inspiring portrait they find beneath all these marring portraits of Him. They would see Jesus disrobed of these unbecoming and outworn garments. They would see Him in the vesture He really wore on earth; see Him working for the Kingdom of God on earth, rising in spirit above those Judaic garments and limitations, into a universal human view of this Kingdom. And yet they are not pessimistic enough to read church history as a history of decline.

They acknowledge how the sacerdotalized and ecclesiastical form carried the Gospel through the dark and the middle ages, and how much the doctrinal form carried it through these ages and through Reformation times. They would not raze those old forms to the earth. They would keep them for those whom they would still serve as ministrant to their religious needs. They would modernize them as much as possible, and would build an additional form in keeping with the old architecture, but fitted with modern conveniences; form a new convolution to the growing nautilus, a new layer to the old trunk—all as means to make the old church more ministrant to the religious nurture of people of the modern world-view.

Again, one of the most impressive lines in our early

childhood's picture of what God is like was that of His all-mightiness. This was a Jewish physical conception, long regnant in Christian theology and largely displacing the distinctively Christian and ethical conception of a Father's love.

God could do anything and everything. But mere might or potency is not an ethical attribute. To-day Christians have progressed out of Judaism enough to replace that conception with that of Christ's conception of *love*, in thinking of what God is like.

Almightiness has passed away as being the chief attribute of God.

Then as to the extent of the physical universe. Imagination palls in attempt to conceive of its immensity, its boundlessness as revealed through the use of the telescope. The starry world bounded by the vault of heaven. The vault of heaven bounded the universe of one sun, one moon, and many stars, that constituted the universe of the ancients. But there is no bound to that of modern men. It is boundless.

So, too, has the conception of His creative action been lengthened immeasurably in time and space. His creation "out of nothing" at any definite time is replaced with the conception of His *continuous* creation. "My Father worketh hitherto." The outering of Himself in creation has been an eternal process, motivated, self-necessitated by His nature as Love. Creation is a process to and from that. "The whole creation (*κρίσις*) groaneth and travaileth in pain"—in birth and life process. The divine is immanent and working in it all; immanent but not limited by His time and space universe. But this divine immanence is of a piece with, and of the same substance as, His divine transcendence. Nature is more than His garment. Nature is His dwelling place with us men. In discovering its laws, we are thinking His thoughts after Him.

We find unity, order, purpose and progress in it, and thus lose the need or the desire for any abstract supernatural interference with His own laws of creation. He is not the absentee God of the deist or of much popular Christian thought. All that has passed away in modern thought and knowledge.

He is more than the great world-soul—(*Animus Mundi*): more than Goethe's earth spirit:

“ . . . at the roaring loom of time I ply,  
And weave for God the garment thou seest him by.”

He is more than God visualized, cast upon the screen of time and space, who Himself is timeless and spaceless. The universe is the utterance, the outurance of Himself in creation and in the process of His immanent self-revelation in the historical experiences of men. That on the part of men is a process of gradual discovery, from partial to fuller form till we see His face in the face of Jesus.

The folk-lore story of creation of the book of Genesis and the cosmology founded on it and regnant through many Christian ages, has finally passed away through the warfare of science with theology. Many of us are old enough to remember the bitter warfare made on science in behalf of that old view.

Along with this and much in the same way, has passed the old view of the creation of man. “Out of the dust of the earth” is still true. Out of the first beginnings of life in the protoplasm, up through forms of life the ascent of the animal into the first form of *pithecanthropos* (some hundred thousand years ago) up to the Heidelberg race (250,000 years ago) up to the *homo sapiens* of Asia (some 25,000 years ago)<sup>1</sup> upward has been the process of man's

<sup>1</sup> Cf. “Men of the Old Stone Age,” by Henry F. Osborn.

creation, of man's ascent into his present form. Some call it evolution and the struggle for existence, some call it God and the ascent of animal life. Why should we continue to think and talk in terms of what is clearly seen to be folk-lore rather than science?

Man has thus come thus far in being "created in the image and likeness of God." That is the archetypal idea. And the end is not yet. His creation and man's ascent still go on, "till we all come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13), the generic man, the fully created man.

But why do we not come to this more rapidly? Here comes the old enigma, the old discord of *sin*. I know no better theological definition of it than that given in the Westminster Shorter Catechism: "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God," as I know no better answer to its first question, "what is the chief end of man?" "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to *enjoy* Him forever." God's service is his perfect freedom. Sin is not merely privative, a negation. It is positive. It is not merely the state of man in the lower stage of evolution. It is a state of man's consciousness. And of all proposed solutions there is none better than that which attributes it to man's freedom of will. Hence the feeling of guilt. Hence the struggle with the patent damnably positive effects of sin. It comes not with a mythical fall of the first Adam. It comes rather with a sense of broken unity with God. It is not a positive inheritance of total depravity. It comes with man's vision of himself as he ought to be. It culminates as he looks on the face of Jesus.

Simon Peter cried out: "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke v. 8). Jesus did not depart from him. But Peter did forsake all and followed Him. Publicans and sinners did not flee His face. "This man



eateth with sinners," was the complaint of the complacently self-righteous churchman of his day. Before the face of Jesus the sting of sin is ameliorated into the sense of shame, so gentle is He in all His non-lordly attitude toward sinners. The blush on the face of Peter, and the blush on the face of the woman taken in adultery show how the sense of sin became a sense of shame before the face of Jesus. Brutes do not have the sense of sin, the sting of conscious guilt.

As Walt Whitman sings:—

"They do not sweat and whine about their condition,  
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,  
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God;  
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented."

Then the modernist conception of salvation and how it is effected has little in common with theological theories. Salvation means the getting of the mind of the Master into one's soul; into the corporate souls of all God's children. So far as we have the spirit of Jesus, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the spirit of service, just so far are we saved here, and just so far we shall be saved when we pass into the Kingdom above. Saved from our sins rather than from future punishment! Saved through gazing on the face of Jesus and being transformed into His image as we gaze in passionate adoration upon it. His love for us begets love for Him, and we go onward in His spirit of service to our fellows. We become like the one we love. We become reconciled to God through Him. God needs no reconciling offering from man. Why not let the old theories go? Why not take Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son as the simple and sufficient "plan of salvation?" The blush of shame on the face of the self-banished returning son, and the Father's yearning heart going forth to welcome him! That is all.



Mr. W. E. H. Lecky, standing outside of any church, gives the following judgment of a historian as to the influence of Jesus: "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love; and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; and has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practice; and has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists. This has been the wellspring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft, the persecution and fanaticism which have defaced the church, it has preserved in the character and example of its Founder an enduring principle of regeneration."

Charles Lamb once said: "If Shakespeare should enter the room we should all rise: if Jesus Christ should enter, every one would kneel."

Modernists do not stop with Jesus of the Gospels. Their appeal is also to the Jesus of the experience of his disciples to-day, as well as that of those in other days. They do not stop with His perfect humanity, as their experience leads them on to confess his divinity. But they do this in other than speculative ways. They will never be able—they do not wish it—to form a purely speculative creed like the Athanasian one. They are first of all resolute in their insistence on putting the much neglected and the much needed emphasis on the perfect humanity of their blessed Lord and Master, as being sympathetic, touched with a feeling of our infirmities, because of His own human experience. Many clergymen say the Nicene phrase, "and was

made *man*" without really believing it. They teach that the real person of Jesus was God, veiled, masqued under human form; that he was at all times omnipotent and omniscient. This they do under the abstract conception of the total dissimilarity of the divine and the human, denying their kith and kinship, which alone makes the incarnation thinkable.

Jesus never claimed the *omni*-attributes. *Omni*-potence is not an ethical attribute. Jesus was ethical and did not need it to be a revealer of God's character.

Yes, we must go back to Jesus for salvation. To which Jesus? To Jesus of the Evangelists; to their traditions, their memories, more or less idealized in their way; more or less blurred from our point of view. We are to go back to their traditions, and then *through* them, and see Him with our modern eyes.

We are to see all of the New Testament books with the interpreting and instructive results of the *Higher Criticism*. But we are told that the church is prior to the New Testament; that it was written by the church, and must be interpreted by the church; that the church has "sealed orders" about it. So some are harkening back to the pre-reformation "bound Bible" theory. It is true that Christian communities and churches had come into existence some years before the Gospels were written. There was no *The Church* then, but only churches, or rather Christian communities. Moreover, they were founded on the oral Gospel, which was prior to, and creative of them. There is one sense in which it is true that the church gave the New Testament. There were many inspiring Christian books written and used by Christians besides those contained in our New Testament. It was not till the Council of Carthage (A. D. 397) that a selection was made and canonized. Most of the others have been lost. Some of them may have been as good as, or even better than, some

that were canonized. Thus the *Didache*, or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, discovered in 1875 and written about 130 A. D., might well have taken the place of the Epistle of St. James, which Luther stigmatized as an "Epistle of Straw." It is written much in the same vein—that is from the point of view of a Christian Jew, or a Jewish Christian.

The church has no "sealed orders" to prevent the free scholarly research and interpretation of any sacred literature. So we go to the New Testament with modern eyes.

## CHAPTER VII

### MODERN BIBLICAL CRITICISM

**C**RITICISM means skilled judgment on the merits of a case. In literature it means an impartial and a scholarly inquiry into the origin, history, authenticity and character of any piece of literature. It is not captious, censorious and fault-finding but a constructive estimate. Its aim is that of appreciation rather than of depreciation. The Bible is the literature or a collection of pieces of the sacred literature of the Jews and the early Christians. It is a record of the religious experience of many men in many ages; of their discovery of the revelation of the divine in and through the human. It is primarily a religious work. It contains the word of God as canonized, A. D. 397. It might be added to or subtracted from. But this will never be done. It stands as completed as do the works of Homer and Plutarch. As literature it is subject to the same kind of criticism as is applied to the Iliad or to the sacred books of any other religion.

This criticism has reached quite a fairly unanimous agreement, as to the questions of authorship, authenticity and dates as regards the various books of the New Testament. Criticism also concerns itself with the question of what the books contain; what was the true meaning of that content to those for whom they were primarily written. In this matter of interpretation, the question of the Personality of Jesus becomes of supreme interest. The

Person of Jesus of Nazareth as portrayed in the Gospels—that is the main question of the day for criticism and the main interest for Christians.

First came the critical study of the text of the various books of the Bible—an examination of the different manuscripts and versions in order to discover the original text, or at least to establish the most accurate text possible. This is styled the *Lower Criticism*. When literary criticism began it was styled the *Higher Criticism* to distinguish it from the former. There is nothing arrogant or obnoxious in the term higher, though literary would be a better term to use. It is simply one form of Bible study. Its work is done in the historical spirit. We must know how the literature grew in order to understand it, and to get the true, *i.e.*, the historical interpretation of it. It asks, what are the times, places, the circumstances, the object and the author's point of view in regard to each book. Is Job a drama? Is the predictive element the chief one in the Prophets? Are the books traditionally ascribed to Moses and those of the Gospels chiefly matters of annalistic record? If so, how far are these annals correct? What sort of a person was the author and what was his purpose? How much did he owe to his predecessors, and how much was his own work molded and colored by the current world-view of his time? What light does the comparative study of other sacred books afford? What further light is given by the new psychology and by science in general? These are some of the questions to which answers are sought by the literary criticism of the books of the Book.

The work is constructive, and aims at giving us a more living book, even for the purpose of devotional use. It gives us a new Bible, rescued from the fetters of tradition, and from the fetters of infallibility—fetters arbitrarily put upon it by Protestant teachers at the Reformation, for



a practical purpose? That practical purpose, at a time when it was thought that an infallible authority of some kind was necessary, was its only justification. And what a lot of unnecessary work and worry it caused for three centuries! Arduous and ardent has been the study required and given by the holders of this idea of the Bible—even greater and fully as disinterested as that expended by the modern critics. They had to maintain the Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Bible; the literary integrity of the book of Isaiah; the equal inspiration and authority of a verse in the book of Leviticus with a verse in the Gospels. They had to work at the impossible task of constructing a harmony out of conflicting accounts in the four Gospel narratives. God fearing and scholarly were those men, only spending their labor in vain.

Then the worry this theory has caused countless multitudes of devout souls, hearing all the criticisms put upon it by friend or foe. Think of the worry caused them by a book like that of Robert G. Ingersoll's "The Mistakes of Moses." Such a book could not be written to-day. If it were it would appear as the product of a belated intelligence.

We need not stop to give the generally accepted results of the literary criticism of the Old Testament. Suffice it to say, that Bibliolatry of the Old Testament, that extravagant and uncritical devotion to it as literally the Word of God, apart from any scientific estimate of its contents, is now a thing of the past.

Our interest is chiefly with regard to the New Testament literature. Is it not open to the same sort of study that we should give, say, to the Koran the sacred Book of the Mohammedans? If not, why not? No negative answer is possible. The devotional use of it under the traditional view of its infallibility throughout, gives a temporary call to halt. But when the critical work is

done, devout souls will find a new New Testament, containing a livelier word of God. From what a host of needless worry they will be freed! From the ineptitude of an indiscriminate use of proof-texts; from stretching and straining of the Scriptures to form a harmony between its various parts; from the burden of obscure passages and faulty texts, and from many other troublesome questions their souls will find rest—rest to enjoy the newly interpreted New Testament and to read it all with modern eyes, as containing the lively word of the living God.

The Gospels are the record of some of the words and works of Jesus. How much more we should like to have of these words and works! We read in the Gospel according to St. John: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written, every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." St. John meant this as an hyperbole of what we know must have been the fact. The four Gospels contain practically all that is known of the life and teaching and work of Jesus. Besides this, we have the historical books of the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, which give us the preaching of the Apostles; the proclaiming the Gospel message; the impression it had made upon them and how they thought it mighty to save men.

Literary criticism has the revised Greek text to work upon. This revised Greek text has been the work of the *Lower Criticism* in its study of the early manuscripts. On the basis of this study it leaves out of our version the following passages: St. Mark xvi. 9-20 and St. John viii. 1-12. It also brackets St. Luke xxii. 43-4; St. John v. 3-4, and St. Matthew xvi. 2-3.

The Higher or the literary criticism begins with the study of the authenticity and genuineness of the books of the New Testament. As regards the Fourth Gospel it finds

the authorship of it to be doubtful. But it at least gives us the impression of a loving disciple as to what Jesus said and did. Practically we have all four of our Gospels left as authoritative narratives, though only the first three are generally quoted by most critics.

Here I venture to summarize the general results of the literary Biblical criticism. I have not been able to find such a summary. Mine is made without any scholarly study of the subject, but I think that it states fairly the general view.

The first half of the Old Testament, up to the book of Job, is regarded as a national history. It contains miracles more than incredible, such as that contained in Joshua x. 13. "The sun stood still and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies," that of raising the iron ax-head from the river of Jordan (II Kings. vi. 6) not to mention many others. It contains very low anthropomorphic conceptions of God, not much above that of some contemporary forms of paganism. It puts a "Thus saith the Lord," before commands that we now esteem immoral. Let any one read this part of the Old Testament carefully and then ask how he must estimate it in view of the New Testament.

But from Job onward, we have men of vision; preachers of righteousness in a lofty sense; uttering the voice of the Lord much more in accordance with New Testament conceptions. Our elders did not greatly err in holding that they found the Gospel in the Prophets.

When we come to the New Testament we likewise find about a third part of it to be a history or a biography of Jesus of Nazareth, and the latter part to consist in the utterances of those who prophesied or preached in his name. It is the biographical and historical part that here interests us. The question is how far this part is his-

torical and biographical in our *sense of these terms*. Here the historical method must be used, just as we use it when studying like parts of any other religious documents.

We begin with the theory of an oral Gospel, held in some form, by all Bible students. This hypothesis, as held before the growth of modern Biblical criticism, is as follows:

The Evangelists drew upon a primitive official oral gospel, drawn up by the apostles or by one of them, which, though unwritten, was handed down orally *without even verbal change* till the time when the Gospels were written. This theory cannot stand in light of divergencies and discrepancies found in the written Gospels.

There are no written Gospels contemporary with the life of Jesus, only those written between the years 70 and 100 A. D. Then they were written in Greek, while Jesus spoke in the Aramaic language. Up to that time the story had been handed on through an oral Gospel, necessarily and evidently much larger than the parts of it recorded for special purposes in our written ones.

The New Testament criticism traces the literary evolution of the Gospels out of the traditional and oral form. It was not until about A. D. 70 that the first one, that of St. Mark, was written. The date of St. John's Gospel is still in dispute. All agree that it could not have been earlier than A. D. 100. St. Mark's Gospel is held to give the most exact form of the oral tradition, and the most vivid and life-like portrait of the Master, though his Gospel seems like a bare transcript of fragmentary sayings and isolated acts of the Master. Later on two great, though perhaps unconscious artists, trained in the movement, begun by the Master and saturated by His spirit, retell the tale, idealizing—if you will—the picture, but in so



doing make us realize something of the majesty and tenderness which once men knew in Galilee.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>I am indebted to Professor Wm. H. P. Hatch of the Episcopal Theological School for this note on the Four Gospels:—

"We must distinguish carefully between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel according to St. John. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the 'Synoptic Gospels' because they have the same general view ( *σύνοψις* ). In order to be understood, they must be studied together. The question of the relation of these Gospels to one another is known as the 'Synoptic Problem'; and it is important to note that it is a literary problem.

"New Testament scholars are agreed that Mark is the earliest and the most primitive of the Synoptic Gospels. The writer records the words and deeds of Jesus in a fresh and vivid way. Many scholars accept the ancient tradition that Mark is based primarily on the discourses of Peter. The Gospel is generally ascribed to one John, surnamed Mark, who was a companion of Paul and Barnabas and perhaps also of Peter. It was probably written in Rome shortly before or soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D.

"Matthew and Luke are certainly later than Mark, for the authors of both used Mark as one of their principal sources. Moreover, the portrait of Jesus in these Gospels is less primitive than that of Mark. An Aramaic source consisting primarily of sayings of Jesus and known to modern scholars as Q (from the German *Quelle*, source) was employed in the composition of Matthew and Luke. Q may have been in two forms or recensions, one appearing in Matthew and the other in Luke. Some think that Q was also used in the production of Mark. In addition to Mark and Q the author of Luke had certain other sources, Aramaic as well as Greek, at his disposal. Matthew is the work of a Jewish Christian, not of the Apostle Matthew. It is more Jewish in character than any of the other Gospels, and was probably written in Syria or Palestine some time during the last two decades of the first century. Luke, which is ascribed in Christian tradition to a companion of Paul, was intended for Gentile readers, the author himself probably being a Gentile. It also was written some time during the years 80-100, but the place of its composition is unknown.

"The Fourth Gospel is an interpretation of Jesus rather than a record of His words and deeds. Its point of view is philosophical or theological, and its portrait of Jesus is in certain fundamental respects very different from that found in the Synoptic Gospels. It is traditionally ascribed to the Apostle John, who is believed by many to have lived and taught at Ephesus until about the year 100. The Johannine authorship of the Gospel, however, is fraught with serious difficulties, and most scholars have now abandoned it. The Fourth Gospel is a fusion of Palestinian, Pauline, and Hellenistic elements. It was probably composed at or near Ephesus in the first decade or decade and a half of the second century by some member of the Ephesian circle. If the Apostle John really resided in Ephesus, the Gospel may contain some traditions or ideas that were derived from him."



This gives the stages in the literary evolution of the Gospels. These Gospels have different aims and there is evidently no attempt to present the same events or to follow a common chronology. But for a period of about forty years, the story of the life of Jesus was handed down in oral form. Literary criticism rightly surmises that in this stage there may have been additions and subtractions and local colorings given to the materials, before the selections were put in writing in nearly the present form of our Gospels. At least it cannot be that an oral story, passed from mouth to ear and thence to other ears, could remain identical or inerrant. We know how rumor grows, how a story thus passed to one, and then handed on to another to repeat, never ends as it began. Give what credit is due to the ability of men in those days to thus transmit a story with verbal literalness, we cannot think that it had inerrancy or lack of diversity. Critics make allowance for this when studying the written Gospels. They ask what was the historical origin of the Gospels? How did they grow from the oral to the written form? Then, what was the purpose of their authors and what did they really mean to themselves and to those for whom they were written, always remembering that the common view was that Christ would return to earth before that generation had passed away. Thus they work their way to the matter of chief interest, that of the personality of the Master, in the light that shines through the pages of disciples, who never fully understood Him, but did not exaggerate, unless it was by attributing more value to "signs and wonders" than He Himself did. At least the Gospels are not stenographic reports of the words and works of Jesus. What then is the most reliable biography we can get out of them? These critics have sifted them all to discover just what Jesus was, and what His message was. Then, how it was understood or misunderstood in

the primitive community, which was eagerly expecting His speedy second coming. The system of a single harmonious narrative gives place to an attempt to interpret the varying forms of one message. In this interpretation the following conceptions are used. First, a writer can only tell the story and give the message by means of ideas and conceptions of his own times. So we must first try to put ourselves in his place, see with his eyes and hear with his ears. What is the background of historical traditions; what the social and religious customs; and what the general education of himself and of those for whom he wrote? Secondly, we must not think that Jesus meant no more than what the average hearer would understand about His message. He had to speak much to them in parables. In His very last days He said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now."

He poured new wine into their old bottles, till they fairly burst and could bear no more. The Master is greater than His biography, oral or written. Then, when a verse or a passage or the account of some of His signs and wonders seems discrepant with other parts of their story, we are to test them by the main tenor of His life and message, else to regard them as not authentic.

Some such canons of interpretation should be in the mind of every one who seeks to read the Gospels intelligently. And they will relieve him of the burden of many great difficulties which meet those who read them as literal stenographic reports of what Jesus said and did. This critical reading done, then comes the question as to the truest portrait that can be drawn of the Master. Then the question how His own message can be translated or stated to us moderns, as He stated it to the modernists of His own day, due allowance being made in both cases for the limitations of both teachers and hearers.

These are the burning questions of the day. What re-

translation is to be made not into Greek for Greeks, as was its first transformation, but interpretation or translation in modern terms for people of modern times—one perhaps for the Oriental mind and one for our Occidental mind.

What modernized portrait can we paint of Jesus? How shall we modernize His message so as to further His gospel of the Kingdom of God on earth and His work of saving souls here, as well as hereafter.

What can we think of Christ and His gospel message? First, what think ye of Christ? That was the Master's own question to His disciples then, and sometimes they answered Him wrongly. That has been His question to men of every age and all have answered Him imperfectly. It is His question to men of our age, and we must give our best answer, though it cannot come up to the full truth of that which He was.

Many men within the church are hungering for some fresh vision of the great light that once shone in Judea, as shown in a previously quoted letter. Can the modernists give it? As least they can give a more intelligent way to read the original Gospels. They can give some new lines for a fresh portrait of the Master.

We shall give a fuller statement in considering the way that the question—"What think ye of Christ?" was treated in the papers given in the late *Conference* of modernists in the Church of England.

Let us, however, give a few lines here, passing by such topics as "the Apocalyptic Christ;" "Jesus or Christ;" "Jesus or St. Paul" and other critical questions. The first line would be that of a *real* incarnation, the Word made flesh; the real humanity of Christ with human limitations, except that of sinfulness; a man among men, who walked and taught as a great leader. Jesus never claimed the *extra*-human attributes of omnipotence, omniscience

or omnipresence, in his incarnate form. And that was His real form in Judea. But the impression He made was that, in all matters moral and religious He was the full and complete revelation; the express image of His Father—God. It is true that most modernists rise to the belief in Christ's divinity in a different way than I do. They use the inductive and pragmatic methods, which I think lower than the speculative method. But then these are the methods which appeal most to the modern mind. And they do suffice to reach the same result, *i. e.*, the Divinity of Christ. Give a real human Jesus first. When men receive that, they get the impression that will, in this age, as it did in the primitive age, leads on to that of His divinity. "Jesus most divine when most human thou art." Critics may rightly charge many teachers with denial of Christ's real manhood. His Divinity is often taught in a way that denies it. Many forms of teaching are dyed with the old heresy of Docetism. That heresy taught that Jesus was only God hidden under a false mask of humanity. God could not suffer. Jesus did not really suffer. Jesus was not really man. There was no real incarnation. All wrong declare the old creeds which say, "And was made man," "was perfect man." And yet many who say these creeds at least under-emphasize the truth of His humanity, while to them modernists may seem to over-emphasize His real humanity. But modernists feel that that is a patent fact in the Gospels, and that that is now as then, the best way to present Jesus to win ardent, loving, loyal disciples who will soon come to worship Him as divine. Jesus was born and lived in lowly circumstances. He increased in wisdom, as well as in stature, and in favor with God, as well as with man. (St. Luke ii. 52.) He worked as a carpenter for many years. He was mightily tempted of the devil like other men. These temptations really appealed to Him, and He had to wrestle with them to overcome them.



A later disciple says that He "was in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin," thereby becoming an high-priest who could be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. (Heb. iv. 15.) This same interpretator of the oral Gospel also says that "he learned obedience by the things he had suffered; and *having been made perfect*. . . ." (Heb. v. 8, 9.) A Christ who can be thus touched, is a Christ that touches the hearts of men. The stations to the cross on Calvary; the sufferings of a true fellow man—that has ever been the most appealing and winsome side of the Gospel story. Jesus on the cross; the man who spake as never man spake—*ecce homo—ecce Deus!* That is the impression He made upon the mind of the early church and the impression that the Gospel story will make upon men to-day. Present the Gospel picture of Jesus as really and truly human at the best, and His divinity will make sure of itself in the hearts and then in the minds of men. This will be purely an inductive process, as it was with the early disciples—the impression of a man who was incomparably greater than any other, who was the actualized ideal of man, fully made into the image and likeness of God; who was greater than the "I" of Jesus of Nazareth. (St. John xiv. 28.)

Practical living will afford better proof than any metaphysical proof. Only *walk* with Jesus and you will know that you are walking with *God*. Read the Gospel narratives and see if you think that it was a chief concern with Him, that men should think rightly *about* Him. That has been the bane of orthodoxy—putting a correct belief about Him before that of a correct life in His spirit. In reading the Gospels let us put aside the idea of a wonder working *super-man* and *demi-god*, masquerading as orthodoxy. For this is the old Apollinarian heresy, that the eternal *Logos* took the place of the rational human soul in the historic Jesus. That rampant heresy in much dogmatic teaching



about Jesus, needs to be condemned again to-day, if not by a General Council, then by the general Christian consciousness, coming from a better understanding of Jesus of the Gospels and His message.

Without dwelling further on this fresh modern line for a new portrait of Jesus, let me refer to two books: that of Rev. Dr. Harry E. Fosdick on "The Manhood of the Master" and that of T. R. Glover on "Jesus of History."

Perhaps this one modern line will suffice for the present. As for the modern portrait of the protean Christ, who will dare to paint it? Each one must dare to paint it as he sees it "for the God of things as they are."

The Divinity of Jesus shines forth from every page of the Gospels. That of His Deity does not appear in them. This doctrine is the work of the thinking side of the church. It thought out the impression made on men, and naturally and logically and rightly stated it in the Nicene Creed. But we must remember that Greek thought never conceived of God and man as wholly different from each other. Kith and kinship between the two was held as a fundamental conception.

The dilemma of "either God *or* man," would have been inconceivable to Greeks. "God *and* man" was their thought. They started with the impression made by Jesus on his contemporaries and on succeeding generations. They started as modernists do with, "Jesus, divinest when Thou most human art." When people use the former dilemma they cannot reach the same results. Ordinary Christian thought generally stops at the first horn of the two heretical horns of the dilemma and says, "Jesus, God *not* man."

Here are a few lines that the modernist finds for his portrait of the ineffable Jesus of the Gospels. "Never man spake like this man." He spoke not as the rigid traditionalist, the self-righteous churchman of His day. He spoke with the authority of His personality, but never

gave a new set of laws, to become traditions for His followers to fight about, if they ever became scribes and pharisees, as surely they oftentimes have become. He spoke the sermon on the Mount, that *Magna Charta* for His *way of life*. He spoke of God as Father, never as King. He spoke in the wonderful parables. He wrought mighty deeds. He did not perform astounding *wonders*. He disapproved of such signs. (St. John. iv. 48.) But miracles of personality; miracles for the good of people about Him, surely He performed many more of these than those recorded in the Gospels.

He was meek and gentle, but He was also fiercely indignant. He was a man of sorrows. He was also a man of natural human joy, and of deeper joy in what we esteem His sorrows. He was unostentatiously magnanimous. He was also severely just. He was intensely loyal to His cause—the Kingdom of God *on earth*. He was absolutely fearless and sincere. He loved common men and women. He did not love the scribes and pharisees who were harming others by keeping them out of the Kingdom, which they themselves refused to enter. He was conscious of fulfilling the old law by transcending its legalistic form with a spiritual content. He meant to kill legalism in religion. The church has not yet succeeded in keeping true to His ideal in the matter. He was conscious of human limitations; conscious of deriving all from the Father, and of subordination *to* Him. He was consciously Master; conscious of His Messiahship and of a Spiritual Kingdom on earth. He was conscious of revealing the character of God, of His power to forgive sins, and of His own unique sonship. He was intensely religious and ethical. Yet he left no new creed or decalogue. He left us, primarily, a new *way of living*. First fellowship with God, through Him, and then fellowship with men in His Kingdom. These are a few of the lines for the modernists' portrait of Him.

Let us turn briefly to the Master's mission, the master-passion of His life. It is easily seen to be that of a revelation of the Father, in order to effect the enlargement of His Kingdom on earth—that of peace and good will among men. All of his teaching centers round His conception of the Kingdom of God; the Kingdom of heaven on earth.

Again, read the Gospels and you may be surprised to see how often He speaks of this Kingdom—over a hundred times in the Synoptics, and four times in St. John, where the term “eternal life” is used as its equivalent. See too, how rarely he uses the terms *salvation* and *saved* as referring to salvation from punishment in the future life. And yet how vastly disproportional has been the use of this latter conception. In his vision of the Kingdom of God, the petty selfish conception of such a salvation dwindles into comparative insignificance. He that seeks thus to save his individual soul, here or hereafter, shall “lose it.” Only they who are ready to *lose* their life for His sake shall save it. (St. Luke ix: 24.) We should say that salvation meant *fitness for service* in His Kingdom on earth; that state of mind and heart that makes for such service. That is the heart and mind of the Master, whose master passion was for the Kingdom of God *on earth*. His disciples never fully understood Him. He had *adapted* the regnant Jewish conception of the Kingdom. They, perforce, would have Him *adopt* it. They clothed Him with it, as in the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel and elsewhere. They wished to sit on His right and left hand in such an apocalyptic Kingdom. They were ready to join in a warfare for its present establishment. When he spake of the sword of the spirit, they flashed out two swords of the flesh. “It is enough,” he said in wondrous condescension to their misunderstanding. Even after his resurrection their question was: “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel”—accord-

ing to their Jewish messianic idea of that national kingdom in which He would have places on His right and left for them to occupy. (Acts i: 6.)

But how piteously petty has been the orthodox picture of the salvation of the soul from future torments. How, at least, it has misrepresented Jesus' idea of salvation. How much more has this conception of His mission been over-emphasized, than that of his conception of the Kingdom. Christ's Kingdom-conception truly includes the salvation of the individual soul, here and hereafter. In this Kingdom-conception, salvation is not in a belief, but in an *activity*. It is no easy matter. It is a following in the footsteps of His most holy sacrificial life. To enter that Kingdom a man must deny himself. His object can no longer be himself in any way. "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness." One must renounce all the petty personal ambitions that bring enmity among men in their struggle for wealth and fame and power. One must keep his eye on the King and the Kingdom and *serve* in that Kingdom if he would walk in His footsteps, and thus have that sort of life that only is eternal and saving. Here surely modernists are offering a new line to the view, the Master's own view as to his mission. I may refer to at least two books which represent this modern conception; *i.e.*, A. Clutton Brock's "What is the Kingdom of Heaven?" and A. Herbert Gray's "The Christian Adventure."

The Gospel of the Kingdom, this is the great Gospel of Jesus that modernists are bringing to the fore to-day, to replace the selfish conception of future salvation through right beliefs. Pray do read the so-called Athanasian creed and then read the Gospels. That creed was held as the preëminent statement of orthodoxy in the middle ages and in some later ages. The clergymen of the Church of England are now required to use it only four times a year.



An American clergyman officiating in an English church omitted it on one of these required occasions. He wrote to the Bishop of the diocese (Dr. Lightfoot) saying that he could not conscientiously use it. The Bishop's reply was simply, "Don't." That is the reply of modernists.

Glover well asks, "what has the Athanasian creed to do with Jesus of Nazareth? Does it suggest His language, His attitude to life, His spirit. Is it not a hideous perversion?" Surely it is all jargon to those who do not think in Greek thought. For those who formed it, it was full of meaning and of truth, and for centuries was esteemed to be a better statement of orthodoxy than the Nicene creed. Is it worth while, even if we had time, to Hellenize ourselves in a way to be able to appreciate its truth? Is orthodoxy of intellect worth the trouble? Is it not better for us to try to think it all out in our own modern dialect?

Here is a general statement of the old and the new view of the New Testament. The old view is too well known to need a full statement. Suffice it to say that it was an acceptance of it as a whole, as the infallible word of God, without any historical and critical knowledge of how it came to be written. It was taken as a book of divine oracles, especially on the intellectual side of doctrine as a new law. The Gospels were accepted as stenographic reports of contemporaries. The Epistles were taken to be their authors' final statement of doctrines. The Apostles were miraculously inspired, and thought that they were writing the last word for future generations. The old view took it all without any regard to the framework of contemporary thought and history.

No modernist can possibly read the New Testament in this way. He knows that it was affected throughout by contemporary ideas and beliefs. He knows to-day just what these were. He knows better than any previous generation could know the historical conditions under which



its books were written. He knows their historical framework and the purpose for which the authors wrote. He recognizes that they had the vivid experience that begets the creative impulse, that later writers do not have. He grants that its intrinsic worth makes it the most inspired of all books. It has stood the test of the ages, and it can stand on its own merits through all forms of criticism that seek to understand it. It needs no arbitrary theory of infallibility to uphold it. The Gospels as well as the Epistles were called for by definite needs of the times. The generation of those who had seen Jesus in the flesh was passing away. Missionary labors of the Apostles had founded numerous widely scattered Christian communities. They differed greatly one from another. The oral Gospel took many forms and was given different interpretations. There was a call for chronicling the main facts, but only relatively a few of the facts of the life and teachings of their common Master. The writers differ much in the account they give of them. The vain attempt to construct a harmony of the Gospels is given up. On the older theory this was necessary. The authors themselves differed from each other, both in mental characteristics and in other qualifications for their work. Each one painted the picture the best he could for the purpose in hand. They did not imagine that they were writing a book of oracles for all future time. This is more emphatically true of St. Paul in writing his Epistles to meet current difficulties. But in spite of the personal limitations of time, place and circumstances and general world-view, they were surely inspired to write as they did. But their inspired work is now read by modernists, who understand and make allowance for these limitations, in interpreting their messages.

“But you modernists don’t believe the Bible!” Yes, we do believe it—believe it as critical study shows it to be.

"But what authority do you allow to it?" We give it all authority due to it as a progressive revelation of God, culminating in that made through Jesus of Nazareth. Protestants were right in appealing from a fallible church to the Bible. They erred in making it infallible in all its parts. They became Bibliolaters. They were right in making it authoritative. Article VI of the *XXXIX Articles of Religion* in the Prayer Book of the Protestant Episcopal Church, states the position of all Protestants:

"Holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

That was a forward step. We should be stepping backward again to make the fallible church the authority in religion. The Bible stands as authoritative to-day, only stripped of its foreign garb of infallibility. It stands above the reason of the individual. It limits the authority of the church. It refuses to be a book of proof texts. No longer can it be true that—

"This is the book where each his dogma seeks  
And this the book where each his dogma finds."

Modern Biblical criticism frees us from such misuse by giving us the Bible, in each of its books, *as it was written* with the time, place, circumstances and purpose. And with the vast accumulation of information on these subjects to-day, it can do this, as no previous age could have done it.

So we answer your questions frankly. No, we do not believe the Bible as you, with your arbitrary theory of absolute infallibility, believe it. But we do believe it in a truer way. We have tried the old way and have honestly been forced out of it. We have tried the new way, and find it to give us a more inspiring word of God. We

should not dare to teach the Bible to our children or our congregations on the old theory. It is not true. Only a belated intelligence could do so. We cannot treat the Bible as the Mohammedans do their Koran, as something dropped straight from heaven in a few years.

It has come to us through the religious experience of men in many ages. It has sixty-six books, each with a history. It is chiefly to be used devotionally. It is thus life giving. But it is to be *studied* as a sacred literature.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CULT

**C**ULT means the cultivation of intimacy with God; the system of ways of access to Him. It would take us too far afield to make any worthy study of this phase of every religion. Suffice it to say that cult lies near the very heart of religion. It is religion's first expression. In and through it passionate need and passionate love express themselves. Here true atonement of God and man is both symbolized and realized. Mere morality can never give this testimony of spirit harmonized with spirit. In morality there ever remains that constant struggle for attainment, which St. Paul so graphically and so piteously depicted in the seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. Morality at its best gives only an asymptotic approach. In worship the goal is reached. Cult is a double-sided activity. Both God and man give and receive. The spirit of loving sacrifice on both sides becomes the reconciling spirit, giving calm and rest and renewed energy to the worshipper. The soul's aspiration finds here its fruition. God is merciful and friendly. Worshipping Him, man realizes his own reconciliation with Him. And this constitutes the real significance and the vital essence of religion. The cult may be of the simplest kind, such as silent prayer in a Quaker meeting. Or it may be of the most ornate kind in public worship. But some form of cult is generally necessary for man's realization of the religious reconciliation. In the matter of the form of cult in Christianity, one should trace the influ-

ence of concurrent pagan cults upon the simple form of cult in the nascent church, changing it into the splendid ceremonial of the two great churches of the middle ages. The natural religious instinct, which had created the pagan cults, is always active in this sphere. Christians borrowed and adopted much of the pagan forms. Alas, they also incorporated their sacerdotalism into their cult. That is the bane which only the Reformation purged out of our cults. The liturgy of the Eastern church is very complicated, ritualistic and symbolical. The splendor of lights and colored vestments and of semi-barbaric pomp; the lowering of a curtain before the altar, while the priest consecrates the elements, and a male choir is chanting the Lord's Prayer antiphonally; the raising of the curtain showing the altar as a representation of the empty tomb of the risen Saviour; the distribution of the elements by instinct to the members standing; the continuous lighting of candles by the members during the ceremony—all this a Protestant views with mixed feelings of surprise and reverence. It is all too complicated and barbaric in splendor to be much of a stimulus to the religious life of a western mind.

But pass from the Greek church in Paris to the Roman church of La Madeleine. The people are all kneeling and praying. Wonderfully fine organ music fills the church and thrills the soul. There is splendor of altar and vestments and gorgeous ritual, but it is not so semi-barbaric. It is simpler and grander and more appealing. One feels like bowing in lowly adoration as he realizes the presence of the spiritual Christ in the midst. Less than this can no devout Protestant experience present at a grand high-mass in La Madeleine.

Pass now to the lowly chapel of the McCall Mission, in an adjoining street where it began some forty years ago. Here the cult is of the simplest and Protestant form.



Praise and prayer and Scripture reading and the reverent celebration of the Lord's Supper devoid of all the pomp and ceremony of the Greek and the Roman liturgies, and lo, your feelings of awe and thanksgiving are deeply stirred. Christ is really present as the Host, and communes with you and you with Him. He enters the open door of your heart as guest, He reclines there as your Host. The real presence of the living Christ—that is the vital need of the soul. But who should dare to limit the form of cult through which this is mediated? Give play to the imagination, stimulating the religious life to those who need the pomp of ceremonialism. Let the esthetic feeling be aroused for it is kith and kin to the religious emotion. Be plain, but not too plain.

Of Cult we may say that Rome has too much and Protestantism too little. Protestants should have more sacramentalism, but purged of its pagan elements of sacerdotalism and formalism and asceticism.

It is only the danger of these besetting sins of sacramentalism that keeps many Protestants from having more splendor of an esthetic ritual.

With us prayer, public and private, might be made a more affective and effective part of our ritual than it is.

“Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed.”

It is the desire for God. Through it that desire is satisfied. Sincere prayer is communion with God. And

“ . . . More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If knowing God they lift not hands of prayer,  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?

For so the whole round world is every way  
Bound by golden chains about the feet of God."

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how *much more* shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (St. Luke xi: 13.) The parallel passage in St. Matthew says *good things* instead of *The Holy Spirit*. The Master's message was inclusive of both. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Too often we reverse his order. We pray most earnestly for what we desire most. Prayer is the utterance of our dominant desire. This is too often the desire for good things, and prayer becomes a begging that God's will may be changed to meet our desires. We seek to get God to do *our* will.

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done—that should be our dominant desire in prayer. Then we can pray as earnestly as possible for the fulfilment of our other pressing desires. Pray for the gift of his Holy Spirit. How feeble and formal such prayer often is. It is not our dominant desire. But pray for it sincerely and our prayer will surely be answered, and all other needed things will be added thereto. But we dare not pray for this supreme gift. It would flood our souls with such riches as would at least dampen our desires for other good gifts. If all nominal Christians could fervently pray for it, we should indeed have a living and a conquering church. God soon fades out of the mind; soon ceases to be the living reality of the soul of the man and of the church that ceases from fervent prayer for his Holy Spirit, and for all other good gifts. We should pray much alone or in fellowship with two or three more in corporate silence and meditation. We should stay in the silence with God the great Companion, who besets us behind and before and layest His

hand upon us. "Whither can I flee from thy presence?" cries the Psalmist. Why should we not oftener flee into a conscious presence with Him. In the sacrament of silence let a body of fellow Christians seek the soul of the universe till they grip and feel themselves gripped by that Soul. Going in from the hurly-burly of business; enter with brain cells whirling about intellectual or practical problems; go in, laden with burdens of life; go into His holy temple and keep silence before Him. The peace that passeth a worldly man's understanding will come. You will gain rest and poise, and power and gentleness of spirit.

I have cultivated the use of a simple non-ritualistic service in All Souls' only from fear of formalism, superstition and sacerdotalism so frequently produced by too much ritualism. Personally I could sometimes enjoy a much more ornate and esthetic form. I am not sure, however, that its continuous use would better serve the purpose of devotion for myself or the congregation. Besides the danger of formalism, in its use, there is the danger of sacerdotalism creeping into its natural home. There is, too, the danger from the esthetic side. It may divert attention from the Lord we worship. It is told of Michelangelo, that in painting the scene of the last supper, he had painted a wondrously beautiful chalice on the altar. In showing it to a friend, he found that the chalice captivated his whole attention. The esthetic emotion that it aroused eclipsed the central figure in the painting. With a stroke of his brush, he wiped out the chalice, saying, "nothing must be allowed to hide the face of Christ in the painting."

Pray first for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then pray as freely and frankly for all other needs; for freedom from suffering, bereavements and calamities, yes, even pray for needed rain, always asking for the granting of these petitions, "as may be most expedient for us." The

reign of law in nature will not prevent answer to all such petitions. The reign of law is the reign of our heavenly Father. The fervent prayer of the righteous is always effectual prayer, though its answer be other than our request.

Rome has too little of the responsive part of the congregation in her services. The priest and the choir perform it all. The same is true of the public services in many of the Protestant churches. The minister and the choir perform it all.

There is need of more religious festivals, a fuller round festal following the steps of the earthly course of the life of Jesus, including the *Stations of the Cross*. Then there is a need of having a calendar of modern saints' days; holy men of modern type, remembrance of whom would stimulate us to a more robust and sane sort of Christian life.

Then there is need in some churches to use many more prayers of the Christian ages. In other churches, there is need to use more extempore prayers. Enrichment of public service in some, and modernizing it somewhat in other churches would help much in promoting the spirit of devotion.

Finally there is need of more sacramental forms of worship—forms through which the spirit enters the open door and communes with us. Perhaps the two that Protestants have kept are not enough. Matrimony is rightly, for the Christian, sacramental. But where this rite partakes of the nature of a civil contract, as it too often does, the sacramental view is impossible. Coming into full membership in the church should be made sacramental. Full of grace and help are all things sacramental—outward tokens of love; "outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us."

The simplest ring put upon a woman's finger by the

man who says, "with this ring I thee wed," thrills the heart with love divine. A bit of bunting—the stars and stripes—warms and nerves the soldier to do mightier deeds than he would without having it wave before him. A kiss, a letter, a warm handshake, and lo! we are new creatures.

One of the two sacraments that Protestants have kept—the Holy Communion—is not observed as it should be. Generally it is used too infrequently. When used frequently it is often used not rightly. Formalism and superstition and sacerdotalism are apt to pervert it. But what a means of communion with the Master we are missing in not having it more frequently. Starting with the remembrance of the Master, the feast rises into mystic realms. The real presence of the real Christ is realized. He enters the open door of the heart as guest. He serves there as Host.



## CHAPTER IX

### MODERNISM IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THE Church of England always has had a body of members known as Latitudinarians at one time, then as Liberals and later on as Broad churchmen. They have been modernists in their days, who have insisted upon freedom of inquiry in regard to traditional forms of church life, and the freedom of reinterpreting them in the light of the new learning of their time. We may mention, as some of the leading representatives of this *school of thought*—(it never was a party) Archbishop Whately, Dr. Thomas Arnold, Dr. F. D. Maurice, Dean Stanley and Canon Farrar.

But now there is a *party* of modernists in the Church of England, embracing many of the Broad churchmen. It has not ceased to be a school of *thought*, rather than one of memory of the olden times and ways, but it is an organized party, for purposes of offense and defense, like that of the Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic parties. I should say that it is the legitimate child of the Evangelical party and the Broad church school. Its organization is called the *Churchman's Union*. For the past twelve years it has published a party organ called *The Modern Churchman*. It maintains a modern theological school—Ripon Hall, Oxford. It has an annual Conference. It publishes a Modern Churchman's Library. It thus for the first time organizes the liberals in the Church of England into a party, and proposes to use all the proper party tactics fairly and openly. Thus far it has been free from the

bane of ecclesiastical Machiavellianism, to which the other parties have more or less succumbed.

It has eminent Archdeacons, Deans, Canons, college professors on its board of governors. Of this party it was said in a recent number of *The Churchman*: "In academic distinction it would indeed be hard to beat this gathering of able men. They comprise scholars of European distinction, deans and canons, head masters of the great public schools of England, fellows and tutors of the historic universities."

Of the elder men, Dr. Rashdall, now Dean of Carlisle, and one of the first scholars of the day, is again crossing swords (after a twenty years' interval) with Bishop Gore, who still cannot see how the Dean's position is compatible with membership in the Anglican Church.

It publishes as its platform:—

#### "AIMS OF THE CHURCHMAN'S UNION.

- 1.—To affirm the continuous and progressive character of the revelation given by the Holy Spirit in the spheres of knowledge and of conduct.
- 2.—To maintain the right and duty of the Church of England to restate her doctrines from time to time in accordance with this revelation.
- 3.—To uphold the historic comprehensiveness of the Church of England.
- 4.—To defend the freedom of responsible students, clerical as well as lay, in their work of criticism and research.
- 5.—To promote the adaptation of the church services to the needs and knowledge of the times.
- 6.—To assert the claim of the laity to a larger share in the government and responsible work of the church.
- 7.—To foster coöperation and fellowship between the church of England and other Christian churches.
- 8.—To study the application of Christian principles and ideals to the whole of our social life."

On its first page *The Modern Churchman* prints these two quotations: "By identifying the New learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance."—Erasmus. "A state without the means of change, is without the means of its conservation."—Edmund Burke.

One can learn about the teachings of this party through such books as that of the Rev. Dr. J. F. Bethune-Baker on "The Faith of the Apostles' Creed," Canon M. G. Glazebrook's "The Faith of a Modern Churchman," and that of various volumes by Dean Inge, the late Canon Freemantle, Professor Edwin Hatch, Professor Sanday and in a volume entitled "Foundations: A Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought," by seven Oxford men. This latter corresponds to the famous volume entitled "Lux Mundi" of the Anglo-Catholic party. All this literature, we might characterize as their *Tracts for the Times*, to use a title given by the early Anglo-Catholic party to their first publications. Taken as a whole, one can get from these volumes a fairly good understanding of the teachings of the modernists in the Church of England.

Like every new party, it has to bear the *odium theologicum*—generally as bitter as that of partizanship in the field of politics, especially from the side of the Anglo-Catholic party. In presenting their case, however, I shall refer chiefly to the papers given at their annual Conference in August of this year. Nearly all of these papers were on the topic—*What think ye of Christ?* Several of them were on the topic of *Creeds*. A full report of them is to be found in *The Modern Churchman* for the month of September, 1921.

Modernists have been accused of not believing in the Incarnation and the Divinity of their Master. The most that can rightly be said is, that they do hold both of these truths, but that they do not reach them in the speculative

way of Nicene Christology, nor do they hold them on the traditional ground of church authority. They reach them by modern inductive and pragmatic methods and hold them on grounds of personal conviction. I think that this is a fair statement of their position. Let me give a review of some of the papers given at their recent *Conference*. I quote freely, but shall try to do it accurately.

In an editorial Dr. Major says that every fair-minded reader will recognize the effort in all the papers to be *constructive*. A note of affirmation runs through all the Christological papers. The radical views of Professor Lake and Professor Foakes-Jackson were held to be historically unjustifiable and psychologically inadequate. The old indiscriminate use of Scriptural proof texts was of course repudiated. Who indeed, we may ask, should dare to use it? As to the denial of the Divinity of Christ, it cannot be found in any of the papers, unless, I think, in that of Professor Lake. None of them found fault with the creed in its affirmation of Jesus' being of *one Substance* with the Father and as possessing both a human and a divine nature. All would confess that in Jesus is beheld *Deitas sub specie humanitatis*, the Deity of Jesus being seen in his perfect humanity.

Again we note the absence of any appeal for credibility to the old view of miracles. How can any one, we may ask, appeal to an irruptionist, cataclysmic interference with nature, unless he does not believe in the divine immanence in nature, but only in an absentee God.

Canon Glazebrook closes his paper thus:—

“(a) The records of our Lord's earthly life, and of his later manifestations to his disciples are fragmentary and mingled, with elements of legend. We desire to clear our thoughts about them, in order that we may have a reasoned assurance about that which is essential.

“(b) Jesus claimed to be the revealer of God. We de-



sire to renew our conviction that He is such; and to understand more fully both the content of His message, and the means by which it was delivered—whether teaching, commandment, example or demonstration.

“(c) For all who call themselves Christians, The Person of Jesus Christ is a central fact. If, therefore, our faith is to be a whole, and not a group of fragments, we must bring all our religious beliefs, our rules of conduct, our hopes and aspirations and ideals, into relation with that center.

“When we have tried to do this, we shall be in the right mood to approach the mystery of His nature, the understanding of which would explain man’s place in the universe, and the meaning of Christ’s human life for each individual soul. Though we cannot look for a complete understanding, we are confident that sincere and reverent effort will not altogether fail.”

Professor Emmet thus dismisses the apocalyptic view of Jesus, held by Professors Lake and Foakes-Jackson: “Gloss this view as you will, it none the less makes Jesus a one-sided fanatic, a very commonplace and uninspiring prophet.” The writer of another paper says: “The authors of such a book as ‘The Beginnings of Christianity,’ appear to reach what we may not unfairly term rejective conclusions by an atomic disintegration, which a physicist might envy.” The conference quite rejected their hypothesis and snubbed Professor Lake, who spoke in a somewhat contemptuous vein about these modernists. He *out-classed* himself from their number. His view is that of Loisy, for holding which I think that the Roman Church was right in excommunicating him.

Principal Major referring to this view says: “Jesus’ conception of Himself is no more that of the Jewish Apocalyptists, than His conception of the Kingdom is theirs. He uses their terms, but He fills them with a



new content." As I say elsewhere, it is a question between such a Jesus and the disciples who understood Him so little that they put their Jewish apocalyptic clothing upon Him.

The papers of Professor Emmet of Ripon Hall, Oxford, and of the Dean of Carlisle (Dr. Rashdall) were the outstanding features of the *Conference* and have raised the loudest criticism. We have seen how Professor Emmet dismissed the Lake and Loisy theory that Jesus adopted the rôle of a Jewish Messiah. Professor Emmet's paper was on the topic, "What do we know of Jesus?" Taking the Gospel narratives and other New Testament writings, together with what he calls "the impact made by Jesus on His age, and the result of that impact in a school, a movement, or a church," he asks "what general impression of Jesus can we gather from these twofold sources? What kind of a person does He seem to have been?" He takes for granted the general acceptance of the reality of Christ's humanity. That indeed is the fundamental position of all modernists. The traditional conception of Christ reads the Christ of Nicea back into the earthly career of Jesus. That is obviously wrong. The problem, I should say, is how to read the Gospels forward into the Nicene Creed, to see how far they justify its statements.

Professor Emmet says we get the impression of an overwhelming personality. St. Mark's Gospel is a thrilling drama, in which popularity and hostility play in the foreground. "Wherever Jesus appeared, these burst into flame. He attracted tremendously or repelled tremendously." Jesus on earth was certainly one who *counted* and made things different wherever He went. All of His wonderful works of healing and His insight and intuitions are easily believable from our present knowledge of psychotherapy and the new psychology. They show the power of a perfect humanity.

Then the method of self-revelation which Jesus adopts is not that of dogmatic self-assertion. The Gospels show us a man who was much more concerned with His *message* than with Himself; a man who was self-imparting and not self-centered. It is simply that of one doing good and preaching about the Kingdom. His disciples soon found themselves compelled to describe Him by the highest term they knew, and that something more than a teacher. Emphasis is put upon the attractiveness of his personality; the harmonious charm of His character; the absence of any sense of sin or need of forgiveness—"the presence of a personality which impresses and grips them." The personal fascination which He exercised on His contemporaries has renewed itself from age to age. Modernists have been enthralled by it and therefore think the best way to present Him to this age, is that of showing the perfect human person that lies back of the Gospel narratives.

They note His immediate and unbroken consciousness of God, as Father. Practically He calls God Father and nothing else, and never calls him Jehovah or King. And clearly it was His aim to pass this new conception on to others in His teachings. Throughout all the papers we find proclaimed the overwhelming personality of this man of Galilee. The calm, the severity, the dignity and the sweet reasonableness; the holding in restraint the terrible energies as of glowing volcanic fires beneath—all this impressed His disciples. Only once did any one dare to pity, and only twice to offer Him advice. That of Peter He met with a withering look and the word of rebuke, "Get thee behind me, satan." He was full of gentleness and sympathy for the sick, the sorrowful, and the sinner. He fondled little children and loved to visit humble people in their homes.

He agonized in the garden of Gethsemane. He endured shameful, spiteful treatment and finally His great

heart broke on the cross. O wondrous love, who can resist it! It touches. "No lips can speak to the heart of man, that have never uttered a groan." The man of deepest joy, He touches us as the man of sorrows. This has been the vital teaching, the winning teaching, in all traditional forms of Christianity. Modernists seek but to renew it again. "His whole life was one of free unstinted self-giving. He left no code, no book, no system. He left only Himself."

Is it not true that such is not the way that Jesus is traditionally preached? Rather is it not in a way that mars His wondrous humanity? Is it not true, all modernists are asking, that this is the best way to get men to come to Him and cling to Him, till they are ready to cleave to Him as God, through peril, toil and pain? I think so.

Then we must remember as Matthew Arnold said, "Jesus was above the heads of his reporters." Jesus was the Messiah. He also believed that He must die to achieve the redemption of mankind into the Kingdom of God on earth. His call was not to seek honor but to give service. But He went on to the end doing the will of the Father who had sent Him.

Professor Bethune-Baker says that "to put it personally, I should say that what my faith in the God-head of Jesus means to me is that I believe that in getting to know Him, I get to know God; that what He does for me, the at-one-ment of which He makes me conscious is a divine work. Never does He cease to be a man for me. He becomes for me merged, as it were in God, or identical with God. When I say that the man Jesus is *God*, I mean that He is for me, the index of my conception of God." This is like but something more than Ritschlianism.

Dean Rashdall tries to tell what modernists mean by the Divinity of Christ and starts with some negative propositions: (1) "Jesus did not claim Divinity for Himself";

(2) "Jesus was, in the fullest sense, a man." When a Sunday School teacher asks his class who was Jesus, and tries to elicit the answer "God," without the important addition "and man" he is teaching the Apollinarian heresy. The fiction is kept up that Jesus was man but not a man but God, eviscerating the Gospels of the human touch, which for men is the touch divine. (3) "It is equally unorthodox to suppose that the human soul of Jesus pre-existed." (4) "The Divinity of Christ does not necessarily imply the Virgin Birth or any other miracle." (5) "The Divinity of Christ does not imply omniscience." Defending these propositions, he goes on with the constructive side. He construes the Incarnation on the conception of a kinship between God and man that is often unorthodoxly denied. Human and divine are not mutually exclusive terms. There is a certain community of nature between them. Man is made in the image and likeness of God and so God can talk with him, can become fully incarnate in him.

"That we are justified in thinking of God as like Christ; that the character and teaching of Christ contain the fullest disclosure both of the character of God Himself and of His will for man—that is, so far as the momentous truth can be summed up in a few words, the true meaning for us of the doctrine of Christ's Divinity." He follows this sure knowledge, with a discussion of the terms Word (*Logos*), and person, as used in Nicene Christology, that can interest only the few who are acquainted with the subjects. Traditionalists who speak of the Trinity as three distinct minds, or centers of consciousness and deny that God is one mind, are the real heretics, from the Nicene standpoint. The framers of the Nicene creed would have denounced them as Tritheists pure and simple.

The *Logos* conception of the Nicene Fathers helps us to "see in their fully developed doctrine of the Person of



Christ, the expression, in the language of a bye-gone philosophy, of that which still is—and, I believe, always will be—the central truth of Christianity, *viz.*, that in the life and character, the teaching and the personality of Jesus Christ, the world has received the highest revelation of God.”

But why then, we may well ask ourselves, should we continue to teach the Divinity of Christ in a language not understood by even educated people? Why not *begin* with the impression Jesus makes upon us and live with that till we see His divinity full-orbed and unobscured by His perfect humanity. That is the way the disciples learned it—not by any dogmatic teaching from Him, but by their living with Him. Verily I believe that if we can get men to *live* with Jesus of Nazareth, they will not be slow to recognize His divinity. And that is the practical reason why modernists insist so strenuously on the genuine humanity of Jesus. They feel that the best work to be done is in the way of bringing present-day men and women face to face with the Jesus of history, in place of the Christ of dogmatic theology. That does not appeal to them. Why not give them what does appeal to them—touch and win them? Traditional teaching surely obscures this vision of His face and mars it with metaphysical theories that are no longer understood and leave men with a Jesus who does not touch them, because He is not given the human touch. I cannot so preach Jesus. I want to win souls for the kingdom’s service. I preach the cross of Jesus, the mightiest of all human touches to win men to take up their cross and follow Him and thereby to be saved by Him with the only salvation worth having—the salvation of getting more of the heart and the mind of the Master into their daily lives and work.

But let me recur again to the paper of Dean Rashdall. Heresy hunters were soon on his trail and some of them



demanding his deposition from the ministry. In reply the Bishop of Carlisle published the following statement:—

“I have received many letters—not, I am glad to say, from within the diocese—inviting me either to prosecute the Dean of Carlisle or at once to condemn his paper as heretical. I have read the paper carefully, and can find nothing in it which amounts to a denial of any article of the Creed. So far from being a denial of the Divinity of our Lord, it is an attempt at once to explain that doctrine and to establish it. Whether the attempt is successful or not is a question on which opinions may reasonably and even violently differ, and there are statements upon matters of Biblical criticism within the paper which may to many readers seem incompatible with the conclusions reached. But I hope that, before forming a final judgment, those who are interested in Dr. Rashdall’s opinions will at least read the sermon which he published subsequently to the Conference.”

I regret that I have not seen the sermon referred to. It is said to have greatly dampened the ardor of the heresy hunters. In any event it is a hunt for the Bishop as well as for his Dean.

Dr. Bethune-Baker, Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, read a paper on “Jesus as both human and divine.” He says:—

“All Christian doctrine grows out of the puzzlement felt by the first generation of Christians. They knew He was a man in outward appearance and life, but there was something more which baffled them, and the doctrine that He was God as well as man was an early result of reflection on the facts of their actual experience.”

“We know that He was human, we believe He was also divine.” Try first to find out what He was as a man, that we may better realize that He was divine. “I do not for a moment suppose that Jesus ever thought of Himself

as God." That would really be to dis-incarnate Himself. That He was also divine, was the best interpretation that those living with Him could give of the impact, the impression he made upon them. So too it is ours. That is the key-note in his volume on "The Faith of the Apostles' Creed." As to this impression of what Jesus was, he, in common with most modernists does not quote St. John's Gospel, as the testimony of an eye witness, as its date and authorship are still an open question. The evidence seems to point towards considering it as the work of another disciple in the early part of the second century. The Professor then quotes this paragraph from that devout Roman Catholic mystic, Baron von Hügel:

"Jesus . . . is declared to hold in His human mind and will as much of God, of God pure, as human nature, at its best and when most completely supernaturalized, can be made by God to hold, whilst remaining genuine human nature still. And yet this same Jesus (though in this supreme heightened sense the Christ) remains thus also truly Jesus—that is, a human mind and human will bound to a human body, to sense-stimulation, to history and institutions, to succession, time and space. He can thus be our Master and our Model, our Refuge and our Rest."

"That," says Professor Bethune-Baker, "is a statement of one of the finest and most Christian minds of to-day. I find the conception of the Incarnation expressed in it essentially in harmony with the line of thought I have been following in this paper, and have expressed in other words in my little book, 'The Faith of the Apostles' Creed.'"<sup>1</sup>

This volume should be read by those wishing to know how a university Professor of Divinity regards each clause of the Apostles' Creed. He tries to disentangle and retain

<sup>1</sup> Published by the Macmillans.

the religious and spiritual value that each clause had at the time when formed. This he admits, rules out the acceptance of the literal clothing and trappings of an age with a world-view very different from that of ours. He holds each article "neither according to its literal construction, nor according to its legal construction, but according to its *religious* construction." Thus some of the clauses become symbolical, as "He ascended into Heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God." While we do not think his mode of treatment is the best one, it should be said that it is the one that was generally used by the modernists in the Roman church.<sup>1</sup>

The later papers at the Conference were on Creeds. The general sentiment of these papers might be thus expressed. Let us not by any creeds set bounds to God's horizon. The need of a creed and the value and proper use of the two creeds, as the best available at present were maintained. They are still living, but like old trees, carry some dead branches. We know how creeds grew to meet the needs of other times. Considering their historical antecedents, one writer said, "It seems high time for us to abandon the traditional policy of uncritical veneration and go back to the more primitive habit of constructing a new creed, whenever the situation appears to demand it." But this does not represent the general tone of the opinions expressed. No *new* creed could serve the purpose. It is best to retain the old ones, though "no reasonable man could accept them, except as statements historically valuable and marking a stage in the intellectual development of Christianity." They should not be used as Shibboleths.

The Fathers at Nicea did not assent "*I believe*" but

<sup>1</sup> I use the term Roman, though I know that American Catholics object to it, because Rome still rules the Catholic church in America, and has silenced the movement of Americanism which was removing that stigma from it.

"We believe." They tried to express the general view of the church, enclosed in a general formula for the learned. Our modern version of "I believe" indicates an individualism not then existing. Complete personal acquiescence is never expected in case of the *general* formula of any other institution or society, not even to our Constitution of the United States, with all its amendments. That would be psychologically impossible. And yet all Americans swear by it, though sometimes swearing at some of its clauses. So too, while many will have respect for the creed as a whole, they are very likely to make mental reservations as to some of its clauses. The public use of a creed should therefore be in the general and historic sense of it as a whole.

Professor Percy Gardner thinks that a creed should "be taken rather in a literary than in dogmatic form." All think that it should be taken in the historical spirit and in a general rather than in an individual form. Sooner or later we shall have to reformulate our faith with a different emphasis.

Another one asks: "Would not a confession of personal devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ, as the supreme revealer of the Love of God, and as the Saviour of the world, suffice?" I think that it should suffice for the personal confession of those seeking admission into the church, provided they had been so instructed as to know what that involved. Another one suggested this form: "I believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son and in His Holy Spirit," adding that "that was enough for St. Paul and St. John; and above all, it was enough for our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ." Later, a member of *The Union* thinks that any new statement should include *belief* in God's purpose for us and our work. Such a statement could and should be drawn up, as follows:



“ . . . with love far-brought  
 From out our storied past, and used  
 Within the present, but transfused  
 Thro’ future time by power of thought,”

and should at least include the following Christian affirmation:

“That inasmuch as the real test of our Christianity is that our daily conduct shall harmonize with the will of God, as declared by Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we therefore declare our intention of working together in a Christian spirit with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:

To improve and intensify our personal experience of God by the regular and faithful use of every means of grace.

To live in such a way that men everywhere shall be able to take note of us that we have been with Jesus.

To follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who will lead us into all truth.

To promote harmonious relations with all men.

To seek that unity which shall make us all one in Christ Jesus.

To promote effective Christianity in the endeavor to make the kingdoms of this world the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.”

The creeds were criticized as not being religious enough; for not saying more of the love of God and of Jesus, and of the spiritual and practical life that glow throughout the New Testament. They do not include the more important parts of Christian belief, those which arise out of personal experience—the keen hatred of sin, the desire of forgiveness, the hope of divine grace, the aspiration after eternal life.

Here is another tentative form proposed: “I believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: we are all



one family in Him. I trust Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, and strive to obey Him in all things. I pray the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth."

The February number of *The Modern Churchman* had given eighteen replies to a *questionnaire* on creeds, sent out to members of the *Churchmen's Union*. Creeds are being either used formally, to-day, or not being used at all or are being discussed and evaluated anew. Traditionalists object to the latter as being sacrilegious. But it is being done and rightly done. So it may be both interesting and helpful to give some consideration to the various answers given to this question by representative modernists in the Church of England.

A distinguished layman says:—

"The only proper use of the existing Creeds, is as significant historical documents to be explained and commented upon by qualified expositors at appropriate times." Another one thinks the proper use to be a devotional one and not as a test; and that the world is ripe and over ripe, for the abolition of religious tests.

Dr. Bethune-Baker, Professor of Divinity in Cambridge University, offers the following: "I believe in God, maker of all things visible and invisible in human life, And in Jesus Christ, His Son our Lord, God manifest in human life, Crucified for us, risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, And in the Spirit of the Father and the Son: One holy Catholic Church, one Baptism unto forgiveness of sins, one Eucharist, one fellowship of the Faithful; And the life of the world to come."

Another submits "that the whole idea of *Credenda* to be required of members of Christ's Church is foreign to the mind of Christ, and is in a different category from the 'faith' or moral act of trust which He sought to elicit from His followers. No church of the future, which insists on other conditions of discipleship than Christ Himself

asked for, will deserve the name of Catholic, adding that creeds should be cast in the form of hymns and sung, with the *Te Deum* as an alternative, in order to their *devotional* use.

The Dean of St. Paul (the Rev. Dr. Inge) says: "I should keep the *Te Deum* and drop the three creeds."

English churchmen as a whole, excepting the members of the Anglo-Catholic party, long ago learned how to take their creedal conformity with an easy conscience and with proper allowances. Creeds are not sacrosanct with them. And it is rather amusing to see that their way is just the way that the Anglo-Catholics in the Protestant Episcopal Church in our country take the *XXXIX Articles* of the church, and are working to replace them with pre-reformation theology which they so fondly call *catholic*. We know that that is but a fond party delusion. There is no "the catholic theology." They are laboring to make the creeds sacrosanct, including the Athanasian creed with all its damnatory clauses. They put right belief before vital faith and loyalty to Jesus of the Gospels. This reminds us of the story of the Englishman who was arguing with the American about everlasting punishment. The American ended the argument by exclaiming, "Well, all I can say is that Americans would never put up with it."

Americans will not put up with any such type of creed conformity. Creeds must be historically interpreted and evaluated; reinterpreted in the light of modern learning and modern conceptions, to make them vital enough to command assent. Otherwise no modernized human intellectual constitution could put up with it.

The *Conference* created quite a public commotion at first because of the very inaccurate and sensational reports made in the daily newspapers, with glaring headlines about heresies at the *Conference*. It seems that some enemies were using the press to create a painful impression, by all

the artifices of unscrupulous partisans. However, the commotion was quite toned down, when the full report of all the papers was soon given to the public. The party at least secured a hearing of its point of view concerning the fundamental Christian doctrines of the incarnation and the divinity of Christ. After the publication of the papers no one was able to assert that either of these were denied. The most that could be said was that they showed an attempt at an historical interpretation and a modern re-interpretation.

The *Times Literary Supplement* for Sept. 22nd granted that the writers of the papers "were animated by a true religious spirit and were anxious to secure a reverent yet free consideration of one of the basal elements of Christianity," and that the papers "show sympathy with what is in men's minds at the present day, and are important for all students of modern Christology."

Bishop Gore, the chief theological protagonist of Modernism, who is aging into the ruts of hard set conservatism, feels greatly alarmed over the issues thus raised. However he has the grace to add these words to his criticism: "I have no doubt that those whose position I have tried to describe above, have so real a devotion to Christ that He has for them the value of God." Moreover he admits that they were given cause for over-emphasizing the humanity of Christ, by the failure of traditionalists to emphasize it sufficiently.

The Bishop of Southwark deprecates any attempt "to discourage free and reverent discussion on the relationship between contemporary thought and the historic faith. A church which ignores contemporary thought rapidly loses those who are educated and fails to influence the civilization of its time. In the workshop as well as in the university the most thoughtful of the younger men and women

are sorely perplexed as to how they can reconcile the new intellectual outlook with the Christian faith. There is thus again a real call for theologians of the church to re-interpret and to re-express its faith in such a way that without the sacrifice of the faith it may make appeal to the best thought of our time. Frequent attempts have been made to do this. 'Lux Mundi' was a notable example: but I think it is a real disadvantage that of late years they should have come mainly from the school of thought which is traditionally 'liberal' in its outlook."

At least, the papers given at the *Conference*, have re-awakened theological discussion. Here is an attempt to restate or to reinterpret the traditional creeds, so as to make them vital in their devotional effect. The men who came back from the front and the army chaplains had seen how little traditional Christianity had to offer either the Tommies or their officers, that would comfort and inspire them.

"The Church in the Furnace" gives one of the many utterances on this subject of the doubt and perplexity of many eager minds on religious questions. Here is an attempt to meet their needs. Their attitude toward the traditionalists is not unlike that of Jesus towards the traditionalists of Judaism. And the attitude of the latter is always that of bitter enmity towards people disturbing the old order by venturing to proclaim a new one. The discussion cannot fail to do good. And who or what is to finally decide? Is the *official* church the *magisterium*, as it is in Rome? If so, will it accept the enlightenment of the new learning and so become a more vital means of forwarding the Kingdom of the Master on earth? And will not the general religious consciousness have quite a deciding voice in the matter? Has not the day passed, when Bishops in a provincial council can be taken as



constituting the *magisterium* in these matters of the forms of dogmas? In this democratic age a further democratizing of the official side of the church is surely demanded.<sup>1</sup>

In writing about modernism in the Church of England, we should not omit some mention of a party of modernists in the Anglo-Catholic party itself. It is known as that of *Neo-catholics* or *Liberal catholics*. I regret that I have little information as to the size and the propaganda of this party. Their *organ* is called *The Interpreter*. They are as thorough going modernists as those of the *Churchmen's Union*. But they move more on the lines of the modernists in the church of Rome. An article in the *Interpreter* for July, 1918, states their position. I need not even summarize this as it is quite like that of the Roman modernist as set forth in the following chapter.

They love their church as a spiritual home, redolent of ancestral traditions; winsome in its customs and cult. They avow themselves to be the followers of F. D. Maurice

<sup>1</sup>The January number of *The Hibbert Journal* comes in time to refer to two articles on the subject. The first article gives a good historical account of the origin (1898), aims and growth of the modernistic movement in The Church of England. The second article is by Principal Major, of Ripon Hall, Oxford, the theological training college of the modernistic party. He sharply and clearly refutes the charge brought against the party as being Unitarian. He says that "the modern churchman could not feel at home in an assembly for divine worship from which the worship of Jesus is definitely excluded." Certainly the central loyalty of these English modernists is that of loyalty to Jesus Christ—to Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels and to His spirit, outlook and mission. Professor Foakes-Jackson applies to them a term, used in an opprobrious manner, that I think may serve to distinguish the party from Unitarianism. He says that "its disciples want to substitute Jesuanity for Christianity." I believe that where one modern churchman could, with any show of truth, be called a Unitarian, there are thousands of good orthodox people who could rightly be accused of tri-theism. Moreover, in the former case it would not be the unitarianism of the Unitarians, but that of the worship of Jesus, as one in mind and heart and substance with the Father. Principal Major's object is to explain why modern churchmen are members of the Church of England and why they intend to remain so. I think that he states the case fairly and wins it.



in his idea of the church as above all things a *family*. They take *authority* to be a *family atmosphere* rather than a *paling*. They like the *ethos* of the older form of the church. They reckon Dr. Figgis as at heart one with them. Life is primary rather than creeds, which are "but a stammering attempt to utter the essentially ineffable apprehension of spiritual reality." They maintain that their catholicism is "profoundly democratic." It has crystallized in a new organization called *The Liberal Catholic Union*. The Rev. N. E. Egerton Swan, rector of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, is the Chairman of this League. He is known to us as making an innovation in the way of saying the *General Confession*. Sometimes he asks the congregation to join together in saying it in silence rather than orally. In a sermon preached before *The Liberal Catholic League* on the test of Churchmanship he says:—

"The fact is that the Church must think out entirely afresh where lies the true center of her religion, and what is the sound test of legitimate membership. She may find them in the outlook and spirit of the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels; or she may find them in a Creed, in a particular hierarchical organization or in a certain type of devotional observance. But she cannot find them in *both* these at once. If the first is the thing that matters, then doctrinal formularies and Church institutions must be quite secondary in importance. They may still be of very high value, but they are so, only in so far as they help to produce or maintain the outlook and spirit of Jesus. And it is a very plain matter of experience that the severest orthodoxy very often goes with a singular lack of these, while a very high measure of this 'mind of Christ' is often found in the most unorthodox and most anti-ecclesiastical. For this reason we must simply make our choice between the two standards: it has got to be the one or the other. If

the heart and essence of Christianity are the outlook and spirit of Jesus, then we must recognize as really of us, all who show that they possess these; and as not really of us, all who fail to do so, however heartily they may repeat formularies or conform to our externals."

He does not plead for a new creed but for a large liberty being allowed to individuals in interpreting particular doctrines in the existing creeds. Thus, he says:

"It ought to be left entirely to the individual to adjust himself, as best he may, to particular doctrines. He ought not to be asked, do you believe this point? do you believe that? in what exact sense do you accept this third?

"I would say that this must apply, too, to candidates for Holy Orders. They indeed are undertaking special responsibilities, and will have to ask themselves questions that would not apply to applicants for baptism and confirmation. But it is for *them* to ask *themselves* such questions. The most that the Church is entitled to demand from them is a general assent to her Creeds, and it would be better to ask only for a *practical* undertaking to use her forms of worship."

I cannot speak intelligently of modernism in the *Non-Conformist Churches* in England. It is very widespread and influential, but I know nothing about any organized parties of modernists among them.

## APPENDIX

## MODERNISM IN THE CHURCHES IN AMERICA

A CHAPTER on this cannot yet be written. It has as yet no history, at least since the suppression of the Modernist movement in the Roman Catholic church in this country. I say *suppressed*, because I do not believe that *L'Américanisme* can be smothered to death. Modernism, it is true, is widely spread in all churches. It finds free and but slightly constrained utterance in most of them. Its spirit and methods are found everywhere. But I know of no organized party in any one of them. Commanding names and prominent theological seminaries might be mentioned. In the Episcopal church modernism is found among the High, Low and Broad churchmen. Modernism in this church is the legitimate child of the Broad and the Evangelical parties.

The present call, I think, is for the organization of a *party of modernists* in all of the churches, with party organs and propaganda. In the Episcopal church it might take the two forms that it has in the Church of England, *i.e.*, that of the Protestant form of the *Churchmen's Union*, and that of the *Liberal Catholic Union*. Both would deserve success in their efforts to modernize this church in the two main forms or parties now in it. I should certainly welcome the work done by the Anglo-Catholic party. It is needless to add that I should be heart and mind and soul with the work of the other party. Perhaps indeed the work done by the former party might be such as to make its richer heritage very tempting to many of the other party, a bit poverty stricken in clothing and housing and nutriment.

A call for openness and frankness of utterance and for forming modernist parties in all the churches seems to me to be an imperative one. Let us stand by our several churches; accept their heritage and organize for ways to make them better servants of the Master in His mission in this twentieth century. Let theological seminaries that are already suspected of being tainted with the heresy of modernism come out frankly as the promoters of modernism in religion. I take it that it is neither unfair nor unkind to say that *The Union Theological Seminary* has done this in the Presbyterian church. Organize, and use all proper party methods, save, pray God, those of wily and unscrupulous politicians that are prone to come into use in any party organization. Publish a weekly and a monthly organ to set forth and forward the modern view of Christianity.

Let us follow truth through the old into the new, "even though it leads over Niagara." To adopt a saying of Aristotle—*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*. Dear friend our church, but dearer friend truth as we see it. In the Episcopal church, the Anglo-Catholic party has shown how much can be accomplished through organization for the propagation of the medieval view of Christianity. They have been in earnest in their work of medievalizing a Protestant church. If modernists feel that they have a truer view of the Gospel as to the Person, work and mission of the Master, why should they not be equally zealous in promulgating the good news to men of their generation? Broad churchmen have failed to be the power that they should have been because of their reluctance to organize. If we have a fresh message; if we really see the Master with modern eyes; if we believe that we have a winsome message for many Gospel-wistful people of these days, let us take the best possible way to spread

abroad the modernized Gospel message in order to win souls to Christ and His church.

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In speaking of Modernism in America, we should not omit the mention of Liberal or *Reform Judaism*. That is a vigorous organized party in the Jewish church. It has flourished for nearly one hundred years. Though bitterly criticized by the orthodox party, it dwells safely in the ancestral home.

The results of modern Biblical and historical criticism are fully accepted in modifying their observance of the Law. The modern world-view leads them to a fresh interpretation of the old forms and dogmas and ceremonies. They are answering the questions how can a man of modern culture remain in an ancient institution; how can a modern heir of an old castle esteem it highly while realizing the necessity of a changed estimate of all its parts and also the need of many modern improvements? And the Jewish church has answered negatively the question—shall we not cast these liberals out of the synagogue? No schism and no excommunication has occurred in the Jewish church, though containing these two widely differing parties, in regard to the interpretation of their common heritage.

“Communicate rather than secede” on the one hand is met with excommunicate not on the other hand. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* has a very good article on “Reform Judaism.” Besides this, there is a scholarly volume on “The Reform Movement in Judaism” by Rev. Dr. David Phillipson and a most interesting volume on “Liberal Judaism” by Claude G. Montefiore from which one may get full information about this vigorous modernistic party in the Jewish church.



## CHAPTER X

### MODERNISM IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

**M**ODERNISM in the church of Rome is now a matter of history, rather than of history in the making. That modernism was gored to death by two Papal bulls in 1907, and all doors locked against its renaissance by the required anti-modernist oath in 1909.

The article on Modernism in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* gives a temperate account from its standpoint of the overt movement in the Roman Catholic Church. The Papal *Encyclical* condemned the movement as *Modernism*. That was a felicitous designation, though applied opprobriously to a complex of movements, all of which were inspired by a desire to bring the traditional Christian belief and practice into closer and more vital relation with the intellectual views and the religious needs of the twentieth century.

It was a clearly defined party, virile and outspoken and aggressive. Its leaders were university men. The new learning had broadened their required scholastic education. They saw with modern eyes through the prismatic coloring of other ages.

What they saw is well stated in a volume entitled, "The Programme of Modernism," a reply to the *Encyclical* of Pius X.

That is now published in English, and should be read by those desiring a knowledge of what the modernistic movement in the Roman Catholic church represented. It was written as a joint letter by a group of Italian modernists, with an introduction by the Rev. A. L. Lillie

of the Church of England—a high church modernist. The authors first protest against the deliberate attempt in the *Encyclical* to give the public a false and unfavorable representation of modernists, as dangerous foes and promoters of atheism. Devoted sons of the church, they yet cannot beg pardon for their position but only set it forth fairly as the *Encyclical* does not. The church must accept the new learning or lose her power with the present generation. She must change as all living institutions do change. "It is impossible to impose religious experience on the modern mind in the same forms as were adapted to the utterly different medieval mind." "We have passed through long periods of anguish, as we have little by little come into sympathy with the culture of our own times." They apply the critical method conscientiously to the Bible and church history, and accept its accredited results, as fully as do Protestant scholars. They ask why should the church refuse to meet the needs of modern times? Why stop with scholasticism and Trent? God in history—in the history of the church's development—that is their fundamental apologetic. So they repudiate the charge of agnosticism made against them in the *Encyclical*. God in history. Yes! God in the human soul—that is fundamental with this group of Italian modernists. They are deeply religious men—incurably religious. They know that "religion expresses itself in external garb." This garb is taken from the environment. Each new garb is best suited to nourish the religious life of its times. Times change and garbs should change with them or become outworn and outlandish clothing. The divine immanence urges change and the relegating of former garb to a merely relative position. They wage no war against the cult of the catholic church.

In the primal immediacy of their religious life; in their appeal to conscience and to the right of accepting all the

truth of the new learning, they are practically Protestants. But they can protest only *within* their church, and that only so long as the official church permits them to do so. And that church no longer permits this. Hence the movement is killed and its prophets are enchained. *Roma locuta est*. Rome has spoken. What has she said? She has spoken in two *Encyclicals*. 1st. *The Decree Lamentabili*, July 3rd, 1907: 2nd. *The Encyclical Pascendi*, Sept. 8th, 1907.

1st. *The Decree Lamentabili*. This decree begins with a lament over the errors of her people who are following "what is new in such a way as to reject the legacy, as it were, of the human race." The decree then formulates sixty-five errors of modernists—against which it protests. I mention only a few of them. The full text of both *Encyclicals* should be read, as they are published in English.

Errors 1-25 deal with the modernist's treatment of the Bible, all directed against the *Higher Criticism*. It protests against any Protestant interpretation of the Bible. It insists upon the *magisterium* of the Roman catholic church to define the sense of the Sacred Scriptures, thus leaving only a *church-bound Bible*.

Another error of modernists is their holding dogmas to be merely the interpretation of religious facts by the human mind, thus stating truth relatively to the culture of different ages. Another error is the following: "For the origin of the sacraments we must look to critical historians, rather than to ecclesiastical ones." Error 46: "In the primitive church the conception of the Christian sinner reconciled by the authority of the church did not exist." Error 49: "The Christian supper gradually assuming the nature of a liturgical action, those who were wont to preside at the supper acquired the sacerdotal character."

Error 53: "The organic constitution of the church is not immutable; but Christian society like human society, is subject to perpetual evolution." Error 55: "Simon Peter never even suspected that the primacy in the church was entrusted to him by Christ." Error 56: "The Roman church became the head of all the churches, not through the ordinance of divine Providence, but through merely political conditions." Error 62: "The chief articles of the Apostolic Symbol (creed) had not for Christians of the first ages, the same sense that they have for the Christians of our time." Error 64: "The progress of science requires a remodelling of the conceptions of Christian doctrine concerning God, creation, revelation, the person of the incarnate Word and redemption."

The sixty-five errors formulated by the *Encyclical*, contain more misrepresentation than of truth as to these modernists.

2nd. *The Encyclical Pascendi*. This also laments the increase of modernistic poison among the faithful, both clerical and lay, as "present in the very veins and heart of the church." Abusing roundly these modernists it proceeds to give an analysis of modernist teaching.

Modernists are agnostics in philosophy and atheistic in both science and history. This is false and a libel on them. "The positive side of their teaching consists in what they call vital immanence." Modernists teach that dogmas arise from man's thinking upon his religious experience. They are either symbols or instruments or vehicles. As such they must be changed as man's religious experience changes. Evolution of dogma is one of the damnable doctrines of modernists. Then they really reduce religion to the personal experience of the individual, thus "falling into the views of Protestants and pseudo-mystics."

Again they are blamed with making beliefs subject to



science or criticism, thus inverting the catholic view of science as only the servant of faith and not its teacher.

Again modernists are blamed for holding that the state has the right to pursue its own end, independently of ecclesiastical authority. The church can no longer be queen and mistress. What the *Syllabus* says about this shows the abiding desire and unyielding determination to regain ecclesiastical domination of the church over the state. For that she constantly works in wise and in wily ways in all countries. She is an astute politician and state politicians may well beware of ecclesiastical politicians in all democratic countries. The ecclesiastical Trojan horse bearing gifts may contain things to be feared to-day in all countries. Roman catholic religion is something to be thankful for, but Roman catholic ecclesiasticism aiming at autocratic domination is to be fought as an enemy by all good citizens. Bless the catholics for the religious life they nurture in our citizens. Anathematize their efforts at ecclesiastical world power. The mad Kaiser Wilhelm was no greater foe to the freedom of nations than is the Pope, with his ecclesiastical officers, with their vested interests in this fight for civil domination. They have hated what they have stigmatized as *L'Américanisme*—a forerunner of and soon merging into modernism in the Roman Catholic Church in this country. This *Encyclical* also condemns the use of the conception of evolution.

The syllabus then mistates the principles of modern criticism—literary and historical—and denounces them as applied to Bible and church.

Modernists “as reformers are to be condemned for wishing a reform in philosophy in ecclesiastical seminaries, relegating scholastic philosophy to the history of obsolete systems.” “Regarding worship they say, the number of external devotions is to be reduced and steps must be taken to prevent their further increase.” Again they ad-



vise "that the ecclesiastical authority, since it is entirely spiritual, should strip itself of that external pomp which adorns it in the eyes of the public." Modernists demand that "a share in ecclesiastical government should be given to the lower ranks of the clergy, and even to the laity." "And now with our eyes fixed upon the whole system, no one will be surprised that we should define it as the synthesis of all heresies."

As to the cause of modernism, the syllabus finds it to be "*pride and ignorance.*"

Part III of this *Encyclical* proposes remedies—antidotes to the poison of modernism, and inoculation that will make future catholic scholars and students immune. Among the remedies none is more calculated to prevent any taint of modernism among the clergy of the future, than the care to isolate her theological students from modern world-culture. Rome has always been an acute psychologist of the older type. She knows the power of early training to give indelible color and to stamp fixed ideas—prejudgments—that will make zealots against new ones. Give her the training of a child for the first five years and the man will remain a catholic. Give her the training of theological students and I am sure that we shall have few modernists among her clergy in the future. And how she does train—insistently, persistently. She keeps the torrent of her own belief turned into the mind of the young, and dams out any counter floods. She is a wonderful pedagogue in leading the young into her own traditional views. No other church can compare with her in this. She learned her pedagogy from Plato's *Republic*. The first remedy proposed is one of inoculation. This applies to professors and students:— "We will and strictly ordain that scholastic philosophy be made the basis of sacred studies."

Far better would it have been for Roman theology if

she had held to Plato as in earlier centuries, when she anathematized Aristotle. Now she canonizes him. Dante (*Div. Com. Inf.* IV. 191) gives the medieval place of honor assigned to him, "*il Maestro di colori che sanno*"—the Master of those who know. The church changed from Plato to Aristotle as the master of intellectual men. But she took chiefly the *barren* part of Aristotle. The *Syllabus* then passes the steam roller of scholasticism over all professors and directors, who must in turn pass it over their students. In the *Encyclical Letter* of 1906 we read: "Let not young clergy be permitted to frequent public universities, except for very weighty reasons and with the greatest precaution on the part of the Bishops. We forbid the pupils in seminaries to read newspapers and periodicals, with the exception of some one periodical of sound principles which the Bishop may judge convenient to be studied by the pupils."

In the same *Letter* we read also the following: "Any mode of dealing with the people to the detriment of priestly dignity, of ecclesiastical duties and discipline, can only be severely condemned." *The Syllabus*, referring to works of modernists, says: "No books or periodicals whatever of this kind are to be permitted to seminarists or university students." Then the steam roller is passed over the editors of papers and periodicals: Then "In the future, Bishops shall not permit congresses of priests, except on very rare occasions."

To extirpate errors we have the following: "We decree therefore, that in every diocese a council of this kind, which we are pleased to name 'the Council of Vigilantes,' be instituted without delay." These are to act secretly and inquisitorially and "take all prudent and prompt and efficacious measures." *Conclusion*: "This, venerable Brethren, is what we have thought to be our duty to write you for

the salvation of all who believe." What a despotic ecclesiastical machine is here laid bare!

We may thank the modernists, if they have done nothing more, for having called out such a statement for the eye of the general public. So far removed is it all from modern thought that the public will not even give it a hearing. Perfect submission to such decrees would surely produce a race of men as isolated from modern culture, as that of the Grand Lama's people in Thibet.

Ecclesiastically Rome is a wise pedagogue. We know how inimical Rome is to the public schools and colleges in this country. She wants only church schools from the kindergarten up through the university. She wants loyal, zealous children; servilely trained children who will be persistently subject to present ecclesiastical authority. That first, and patriotic citizens—well that just so far as her autocratically trained members can be patriotic citizens of a democratic country. None can doubt the loyalty and patriotism of our catholic brethren in the great war. The Knights of Columbus were chivalrous knights of democracy. But then catholics in this country breathe our modern air. The steam roller of the ecclesiastical machine has not yet done its work.

But here comes a question for Protestants to consider: How shall their children get a *religious* education? Another question is, How can a state afford to neglect the religious culture of its coming citizens? We know that it is the *disposition* of the citizens that guarantees the observance of its laws, and that religion is the foremost factor in creating the loyal disposition. Merely secular education may make "frightful Huns" of the next generation of our citizens. Mere secular culture may turn out clever rascals and clever law breakers. The religious disposition must be cultivated to prevent the merely secular and self-

ish spirit from getting the upper hand in the lives of citizens. Protestants must either return to the old habit of home-training of children in religion, supplemented by that of church-training, or insist that religion and ethics must be made an important part of the education given in the public schools. They think that they do not have time for the former, and they are too weak to demand the latter.

Shall they then take their children out of the public schools and send them to church schools? I think that the catholics are entirely right in recognizing (1) the mighty force of religion in human life and (2) in recognizing that the religious disposition should be cultivated, as it can best be, in early life.

Protestants should see to it, that in some way their children receive religious instruction and nurture. Either give it to them themselves, or insist that the public schools help in the work. Let them not be frightened by the bugbear cry against *sectarian* teaching in our public schools: or let them return to the Roman Catholic method of church schools. There is much to say about the evils of this latter way. But we must grant that it is a mighty effective way. And if Protestants believed as strongly as Roman catholics do in religion and its power in life, they would either follow their method or they would put up a strong fight for the teaching of religion in the public schools.

The fact is patent, that the children of Protestants are not getting their due in this matter. It is also a fact, that the state cannot afford to have its citizens either non-religious or irreligious. Let Protestants urge their rightful demand for religious instruction in our public schools.

I have forbore to quote the harsh charges and mean insinuations made in the two *Encyclicals*, against the modernists. These, taken with the direct charges, which are generally misrepresentations of their views and purposes,



give us a most unjust portrait of the catholic modernist. Sabatier says, "There is not in the land of the living, a monster of the type the Holy Father describes. . . . He is a nightmare creature with the voice of a lamb, the tail of a fox, the jaw of a wolf, and the wings of a seraph . . . and though he is a compound of all errors, you can accuse him of no vice—he is neither drunken, nor lewd nor slothful."

But we must not omit notice of a further remedy applied by Rome to all of her clergy, in order to purge them of the poison of modernism. Soon after the issuing of the last *Encyclical*, there was sent out what is known as *The Anti-Modernistic Oath*, to be taken by all of her clergy.

The opening clause is as follows: "I accept and firmly embrace everything that has been defined by the unerring *Magisterium* of the church; whatever has been declared and promulgated, especially those doctrines which are directed against present day errors." The following is a summary of the rest of this oath. Miracles and prophecy must be accepted as the sure signs of the Christian religion. The church of St. Peter must be accepted as the custodian and teacher of the Bible. The heretical *dictum* of the evolution of dogmas must be renounced.

The oath ends thus: "So I promise so I swear." From the psychological standpoint, no better remedies could have been taken to expurgate modernism from the minds of all the members of that church. If the educational system of Germany, under the strong hand of the Kaiser could, in fifty years, change the mind and *Gemuth* of the German people from being people of *culture*, in the largest and finest sense of the word, to being a people devoted to the barbarisms of *Kultur*—the culture of physical force—we may well fear that Rome may purge out modern thought from the minds of her people and fill them still more with medievalism and undemocratic ideals. By the



close of 1910, this stringent oath was taken with few exceptions by Rome's priests throughout the world. Many took it with a *caveat* and with violent protestations against it. It is pitiful to read many of their bitter outcries against what they were compelled to take. Their mother church, on its official side, treated them like a cruel step-mother.

*Roma locuta est*, and that rightly from her official standpoint. And her modernists submitted, and that also rightly, from their standpoint. Let me in justice to both parties elaborate this statement.

a. Rome spoke rightly from her own standpoint. The genius of Rome is to rule. As Virgil said of old Rome, so the Roman Catholic Church still says it and believes it to-day. The old Roman religion was aristocratic. The Christian religion soon became the same in its organization for government. As such Rome saved the church from the anarchy that the Gnostics, Montanists and other wild Christian sectaries would have worked.

What Rome did, from the third to the thirteenth century to preserve and propagate Christianity, ought to be a commonplace fact of history which too many Protestants are prone to forget. Law, order, and authority! These she gave and used in times of need. But authority loves authority even when its work is done, and new times and conditions need modification in form and methods. *That* Rome has not learned. In modern times and in democratic countries, she changes not. That being her standpoint, we may concede that she was justified in silencing her modernists.

But Rome spoke wrongly in her violent attacks upon modern Biblical criticism and the historical method; upon the new learning in general and upon democracy as against autocracy in a way that should be a warning to all the Protestant churches. Her fight against all these is as futile

as that of Xerxes, Canute or Mrs. Partington against ocean's tides. The critical, the historical and the scientific methods are the three dynamic forces in the world's intellectual progress. Only at its own peril any Canute Pope or any official church organization can say to them: "thus far and no farther."

The Roman Modernists, too, were right from their standpoint, in submitting to Rome's decrees. Their standpoint was, that Rome was the true and only church, and that she was their mother.

This is a striking note in the attitude of these modernists to a persecuting church.

It is that of love for and loyalty to mother church. They are unfaltering in their devotion. They kiss the hand that smites them wrongfully, as a loyal son will not disown the parent that unkindly and unjustly chastises him. They put parental before filial rights.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AND THE PROTESTANT CONSCIENCE

THESE Roman catholic modernists submitted to the harsh decrees of the ruler of the Romans. They loved the mother element of their church too much to commit the sin of schism. Protestants may wonder at their attitude to a persecuting church. We should realize that they had lived, moved, and had their being in a Roman catholic atmosphere very different from and much more pervasive and insistent than that of ours. They had a mentality and a morality and a religiosity different from ours. The mother apron strings still held them.

It is very difficult for a Romanist to have an appreciative understanding of the religion of Protestants, and equally hard for Protestants to have the same for the *religion* of Roman catholics. I should scarcely dare to give my own as to the latter. I might be accused of being on my way to Rome. That could never be my goal unless Protestantism runs entirely out of religion and further into mere intellectualism (orthodoxy or heterodoxy) where religion perishes; or into societies for ethical culture and social uplift, which, vital as they are, cannot keep their vitality apart from connection with real religion. Then—"Great God. I'd rather be a pagan suckled in a creed outworn,"—than to be without some form of embodiment for the preservation and propagation of the real and distinctively *religious* spirit. Personally, I have always been

able to make a synthesis between the results of any critical studies—drive me, as they often have, from what I considered firm ground—and my adoration of Jesus as Lord and Master, and so, as Saviour.

“Jesus, lover of my soul!”

“Jesus, Saviour of my soul!”

I am incurably religious and Christian.

1. (a) The *ethos*, the envioning, communal tissue is very different for the born and bred Roman catholic from that of the born and bred Protestant. It is more distinctively *religious* for Roman catholics than for Protestants to-day. From cradle to grave the Roman catholic is enveloped in this religious atmosphere—pagan as much of it is—and nourished and dyed, stamped, prejudiced by it—kept an infant, we may say, kept under tutelage too long, nay, always. But it is all primarily and distinctively *religious*.

There is less of this religious atmosphere, a thinner, a less obvious and persistent, and in our day, a less conscious objective *ethos* for the Protestant. The truly religious family atmosphere; the pious home with its pious customs—how rare to-day that is, among us Protestants. It was not so, thank God, when I was a child in a Presbyterian home. Religion was the chief concern. The religious atmosphere was persistent even if a bit too much and too heavy. How rare to-day, we say, is the pious Christian home. It need not be so. It ought not to be so. It cannot be so, if our children are to be Christians rather than mere worldlings.

There is also less of distinctively religious training for the Protestant. Rome uses the kindergarten method; keeps it up too long, we think. She teaches objectively through folk-lore, fable, legends, and through pictured religion in cult, and symbolism in dogma. Religion is

swathe him, prejudice him, form his pre-judgments. They nurture, perchance poison, his higher life; form the spiritual bath in which the crass lump of flesh and blood must be baptized in order to become a man. No man can escape these pre-judgments. Prejudiced he must be, whether pagan or Jew or Christian, or even atheist. My station in life, my membership in any and all of these institutions, prescribe *what* my *ought* commands me to do. Of course there is a gradation in the worth and authority of these institutions that often brings about a "conflict of duties." These nurturing institutions give the concrete specific *whats* of his inner *oughts*.<sup>1</sup> Among these none are more strenuous in emphasis, than those pre-judgments formed within the holy and tender web of human affections of family and church. The concrete conscience of man is an educated conscience and has a history. Where a mother church assumes most of the education, that church's rules become the highest "*what*" for the inner "*ought*." If Rome, as we are disposed to grant, mothers her children more than do most of the Protestant churches, then her "*whats*" will command stronger loyalty. The church will be esteemed the highest "terrestrial God;" not merely a human institution, but the extension of the incarnation of God in this world.

Duty, we see, runs through a series of duties. The highest of these is duty to God. That means for the Roman catholics, duty to obey the voice of the church. When conflicts of duties arise, duty to the church gets the pre-eminence that it has already achieved through its motherly education.

But the Protestant conscience has not been educated to this view of the visible church as the ultimate embodiment of the "*what*" for his "*ought*."

Though never claiming a private conscience as law-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Hegel's Ethics," Introduction, pp. 1-53.



giver; though recognizing the weight of private judgment for the mature educated Christian, the Protestant does acknowledge the authority of the Holy Scriptures and of the communal Christian consciousness.

But he does not recognize even these as giving the ultimate content for his sense of oughtness. He has a vision of the Kingdom of God on earth coming down from heaven, of which all external institutions are meant to be the ministrant servants. Still nine-tenths of his educated conscience is of the conformist type. But times come when he feels that something is wrong; that his recognized authorities are not doing their best for the advancement of this Kingdom of God. He becomes, conscientiously nine-tenths a non-conformist—a reformer. God's service is perfect freedom, and God's service can best be found in some reformation or transcendence of conventional forms. And this has been the dynamic of all moral and spiritual progress. It has been the voice of God in the soul of men, leading, persuading, commanding them into better and better forms of his service.

To illustrate the difference between the Roman catholic and the Protestant conscience take the following story:

In a theological discussion with a friend, old Dr. Lyman Beecher said: "I will follow the truth if only it does not lead me over Niagara." "Then," was the reply, "you are no follower of the truth. I will follow it if it does lead me over Niagara." This might be taken as a discussion between a Roman catholic and a Protestant modernist today. "Over Niagara" for the one would mean, "out of the church." In that sense at least, the Protestant would go over Niagara, in following truth, and generally the Romanist would not.

Whether rightly or not there is a prevalent idea that Roman catholic morality is more lax or flexible than that of Protestantism. Rome distinguishes between *venial* and

more akin to esthetics than to philosophy or science. It thrives better on poetry than prose. Imagination rather than the critical understanding nourishes it. The Protestant is too apt to get the religion of the mere understanding. He gets dogma, intellectual schemes or "plans of salvation" or orthodoxy, which has been the bane of Protestantism from its beginning. Rome has all that in her *scholasticism*. Tyrrell thought that to be the bane of catholicism. But Rome keeps that for its clergy. It is her intellectual side. If that were all she would be as sterile and moribund as is the Holy Orthodox church of the East, or any Protestant church in which orthodoxy is still regnant. Of symbols, of sentiment, of pictured religion, Protestantism has too little. Literalism nowise nurtures: neither does the spirit without the letter long continue to do so. The spirit in the letter, in the signs and symbols, in festival and song, that is the way of the spirit incarnate.

"The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him." There is more of the spirit of reverence, of devotion; more detachment from things secular, including dogmatics, in Roman catholic churches than in many Protestant churches. The people, rich and poor side by side, are there to *worship*. Back to Jesus, through however many intermediaries, it is always back to, and adoring Jesus. Protestants *go to church*, or used to, chiefly to hear the sermon—too often a rehash of traditional doctrines or of traditional churchmanship. Or the sermon—stigmatized as the chief Protestant Sacrament—has turned into an essay or an ethical discourse. But these can be found, in better form, elsewhere. The fervor of old evangelical preaching is not present in it to appeal to the emotions and to excite the truly religious spirit. The real presence of Christ is not made to be felt deeply. When the Roman catholic enters his temple, the *Real Presence*

is present for him on the altar. He adores a present Christ, in his superstitious way, we say, but he *adores*.

Then the Virgin cult. Well, read F. W. Robertson's two sermons for the best Protestant view of the matter—the maternal element in the parental idea of God. There is too much of the Jewish Jehovah element in most of our conceptions of God the Father Almighty. And till the fuller and truer conception of the real humanity—feminine and masculine—and the real divinity of Christ, *re-achieved* through His earthly life of obedience and suffering and mission, till the presence of the real Jesus in heart and mind of Protestants is brought back in modern evangelical form in our churches, they will lack the element of devotion that the Roman catholic finds in his Mariolatry.

(b) The Conscience thus trained.

Without any analysis, let us take conscience in the common use of the term, as the sense of oughtness, obligation, loyalty. Let us take it as a part of man's psychical make-up, inherent and persistent in the lowest savage and the most civilized man. Let us grant that it may be bruised and stifled, perverted and distorted in its workings, still its voice is ever thundering from the inner Sinai, *thou oughtest*.

But what does it thunder? What monologic, decalogic, myrialogic commands does it utter? What are the specific *oughts* or *whats* to which it says, *thou must*? What are the contents, the objective side of this subjective sense? It is not evolved from within. It is not an individualist creation out of nothing. It is the product of one's environing tissue from the cradle up. A man is a man only as a social animal.

*Unus homo nullus homo.* The individual is a social product at birth. He is born into a family; into a social set; into a country with its ideals and institutions for making him a good citizen. All these receive him, en-

mortal sins. She has her pardons and absolutions. Penances help undo the sins. Her members need not be forever hounded by the terrors of the conscience-stricken. But take the Protestant conscience, the non-conformist, or puritan, or New England conscience and there are few of such palliatives. The conscience-stricken man is dogged by the furies, as well portrayed in Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*.

The Protestant knows too little of the doctrine of forgiveness, and no penance can undo his sin or overrule it for good. *Moral rigorism* rides him to death. *Fiat justitia ruat coelum*. His heaven falls into chaos without recreative power. With Kant he holds that under no conceivable circumstance is it ever right to tell a formal lie. Lie and your heavens fall. Take the formal lie of the physician to his patient (now recognized as psychologically the most curative agent in his *materia medica*); take the formal lie which alone can save a friend from the sword of a murderer; take most of the "cases of conscience" and the Protestant conscience can never absolve him from the crime of inward anti-nomianism. Here at least is a debatable question in ethics.

Then within Roman catholic ethics there is the specialized form of the ethics of the Jesuits. Their fundamental principle is that "the end justifies the means." This has been a fundamental principle in all rational ethics from Aristotle onward. Virtues as such, are means to accomplishing the highest end. But this conception is too easily pervertible. When the highest good is identified with the visible church, then *every means* that helps to preserve or enhance its welfare, is justified. When, as with the Jesuits, the church is made the "terrestrial God," absolute ethics become relative. The Jesuits can, historically speaking, be rightly charged with what, for Protestants is a lie, though it be camouflaged with the cover of



expediency. Moreover, their doctrines of "moral probabilism" leads directly to an easing the conscience, where moral rigorism logically fails.

Upon the whole, then, we must say that the Roman catholic conscience is more flexible, less tyrannical, perhaps a bit more *humane* than that of the Protestant. It is only where it faces relation to his church, that it takes on the inflexibility, the hardness, the inhumane features of the Protestant conscience. The whole subject is worthy of a more extended and a deeper analytic study in the theory of ethics.

This helps to explain the catholic modernist's remaining in his church where the Protestant conscience would command him to get out. And, up to the present day, there has been something of the same spirit in Protestant churches that would "put out" those who are unable to say their shibboleths literally. Excommunication and heresy trials have been for much less grave causes than in the church of Rome, and likewise secessions. There is too much of the civil contract element and too little of the organic and home-like idea of the mutual relations between the church and its ministers and members. "Why don't you get out?" That is the way the Protestant conscience puts it to one who has outgrown the literalism of his church.

Can we then, in view of this catholic mother, this catholic mentality, this catholic conscience and their belief in Rome as the *jure divino* Church, can we blame these modernists for submission rather than commit the sin of schism, or suffer the pain of excommunication? With that upon them, they would have felt themselves to be uprooted, *déraciné*, homeless outcasts. A Protestant so persecuted would have withdrawn into another fold, into a roomier one. Thus Dr. Charles A. Briggs withdrew from the Presbyterian and entered the Episcopal church, as being



the roomiest one of all, besides possessing a richer heritage of past Christian ages, than other Protestant churches.

As long as this church remains a Protestant church she can well afford to smile at the taunt of bitter denominationalism, in stigmatizing her as a "Botany Bay" church. That is a base slander. Some time she may take another step forward—from Protestantism to Modernism and become the *Modernist Episcopal Church*.

In closing it should be noted that what I may style the Episcopalian conscience cannot be rightly classed with either one of these two others. In the Church of England, "the non-conformist conscience" is rather a term of reproach than of repute. Till recently, both in the universities and in the church, creedal tests have been hard to bear. The clergy of that church have been greatly overburdened with creed subscription. But they learned to give this subscription with an easy conscience. They made allowances of many grains of salt. They did not accept them in their literal sense. With a wry face and a twinkle in the eye, they swallowed them whole, including the (to the most of them) unintelligible Athanasian creed, with all its anathemas. They came to have a more flexible type of conscience. The same is true, though in a less degree, of the Episcopalian conscience in this country.

Too often, however, the modern Protestant withdraws from any form of the church. Better Rome than no church! Better Rome than Unitarianism, which would be a sterile home for the trained theologian who would cease to be that in giving up the Nicene Christology; and a cold home for the devoutly religious soul. We may thank the Unitarians for their work against the religious sterility into which New England orthodoxy had drifted. We esteem them for their fine culture, and their high ethical idealism. We are appreciative of their minimum of Christ-worship. They are a power for righteousness among

men. And to promote this was the Master's mission. But Unitarianism does not nourish the *distinctively religious* life. There have been few Christian mystics in her fold. We remember with gratitude, Channing and Peabody and Martineau and some others in whom we and others have found inspiration for holy living. Yes, there have been some saints among the Unitarians. The author of "Nearer, My God, to Thee" was a Unitarian. But there are *thousands* of sweet saintly mystics in the Roman catholic church. Unitarians may be weak on the specifically religious side, but they are surely strong on the ethical side. With all their culture they have not gotten rid of the old-fashioned Protestant conscience. And thinking it all out as regards the individual's character and the becoming dignity of humanity, we must say that while the Roman catholic conscience seems to be a bit more *humane*, the Protestant conscience is surely more *divine*.

## CHAPTER XII

### FATHER TYRRELL AND ABBÉ LOISY

THE noblest Roman of them all was the Jesuit Father Tyrrell. He was the most winsome, pathetic and tragic figure among the Roman catholic modernists.

Loisy was the scholar of the movement, erudite, academic, coldly critical. He lacks the glow of the mystic. I find nothing in all his books that wins the heart. He was excommunicated March 4th, 1908, and that rightly, I think. He seems to have been a bit disingenuous and an opportunist in all his defense of the Roman church. I have previously given an extended critical review of his books <sup>1</sup> and need not burden this book with further notice of them. I think that his excommunication was right for the following reason. He explicitly denied any historical worth to the accounts of Christ's resurrection.

The miracle of the resurrection cannot be thus denied. St. Peter's early statement holds: "It was not possible that He should be holden of it (death)." (Acts ii. 24.)

It was the culmination of His ethical miracles, wrought by the mighty power of a perfect human personality, as that ripened again into "the form of God" which he voluntarily laid aside when He was "made in the likeness of man" (Phil. ii. 6, 7). The power of this personality emptied the tomb and made intercourse with His disciples again possible. His risen body was very different from the

<sup>1</sup> "The Freedom of Authority," pp. 45-156.

body laid in the tomb. His full excarnation had already begun. It continued through the forty days, till He returned to the Father. Most of His recorded miracles are ethical ones. They were wrought by His wondrous, sinless personality. We may well doubt the record of those seeming to be divorced from this—mere wonders of power. Power does not prove goodness. If we were left with those of the cursing of the fig tree, the demoniacs and swine, and the finding a piece of money in the mouth of a fish, we might have a paltry conception of His miracles. Jesus discouraged men seeking *such* signs and wonders. He said that false Christs would arise and perform them. He was no such miracle worker. His life and teaching were the standing miracle. Through His wondrous personality He wrought works of unusual power for the help of men. We do not believe He wrought the others. Why should belief in them be required in this day when the old proof from miracles has been given up? Who to-day craves such miracles? Who to-day, with the sense of law, order, unity and purpose in nature could believe them.

Loisy first gave up the miracle of Christ's wondrous personality and so readily denied that of His resurrection. No fact in history is more sure than that of the firm belief of the disciples that they had seen and talked with the risen Master. This gave them the *Gospel of the resurrection*, to preach as glad tidings to men. One may conceive of the resurrection, in different ways, but cannot deny that Christ made some sort of *posthumous* manifestations to his disciples. The church was surely built on the belief in the historical fact of His resurrection.

Loisy makes the Gospel Narratives of the resurrection to have been the work of the subjective faith of the disciples. Their phantasy painted the Gospel stories about it. They raised Him from the dead and glorified Him. Better, we say, pure philosophical idealism than such subjec-

tive fancies of unlettered men as a foundation for a living faith.

Tyrrell was a deeply religious soul. Once he wrote to a friend, "I feel a far deeper fraternity and sympathy with any religious non-conformist (even with a Baptist minister) than I do with Abbé Loisy." Read George Tyrrell's *Letters*, posthumously edited, and you will love him. Here is revealed the living man and his living thought. He thought as he fought and moved forward. Here we catch him in various moods, off guard, but always on duty. Here we find the saving grace of sparkling humor. Here we find the heights and depths of his mystical life in Christ. He was an Irishman by birth and an Irishman in temperament, volatile and of a quick flash-in-the-pan temper, abounding in apothegms. His editor says: "In his nature was a curious blend of pugnacity and peacefulness: of reasonableness and perversity." He was truly human in his tenderness and sympathy. But what strikes us most forcibly in these letters is his fine spiritual insight, moral acumen, and psychological sagacity. The volume is a treasure; one of the volumes that one wants to keep on his private bookshelf. It abounds in ringing, stinging, sticking expressions. Only one will take with allowance many things that he writes in the *abandon* of friendly personal intercourse.

He had not the vice of small minds—the fear of contradicting anything that he had ever said before. He dares to let himself go freely on the spur of the moment. To a friend whose dog had died, he wrote: "Poor Chough. What does he think of the *Ewigkeit*? How hard it is to think of that boisterous affectionateness put out like a farthing dip." He loved nature. "How do I know that flowers don't pray? I am quite sure that they do." Here he voices Kilmer's feeling in his poem on *Trees*. As illustrating his sense of humor, take the following: "Could you



translate *Tu es Petrus*, You're a brick?" While he was still a Jesuit he wrote, concerning the titles of his books about to be published,—“I suggested the title of *The Travails of an Irish Gentleman in Search of a Religion*. But my publishers did not see it, and thought my spelling was bad.” To a lady friend who wrote to him about some soul-aches, he replied: “I think your soul-ache is a weather ache. And that is the real misery, that our souls are part and parcel of this earth machine.”

When told of a fellow priest's practising his sermon, gestures and all, he says, “The Methodist devil broke loose in me and got hold of my tongue. And I said, Good God! fancy Jesus Christ, or Peter or Paul, or any man not sodden through with artificiality and untruthfulness, mincing before a mirror, pinking and pruning his peacock feathers, practising sighs and grimaces to cover his own hollowness of heart and lack of faith.” “Pulpit Rhetoric,” he adds, “is the surest symptom of religious decadence and death.”

“*Religion* has had so little to do with the shaping of the Creed; the council of Nice seems to have been just as disreputable a business as that of the Vatican; as purely political in its origin and issue. One is driven back always to the religion of Jesus and away from that *about* Jesus.” “God will not ask us: what sort of a church have you lived in? But what sort of a church have you longed for? It seems to me that the Roman church (not the Papacy) presents the suggestion, ‘the broken arcs’ of a more perfect round than any other. A fragment by Phidias does more for æsthetic education than the work of his pigmy followers. There are treasures in every dust heap and perhaps the Roman dust heap is the biggest and richest of all.”

Tyrrell was a Christian mystic, with a practical turn. “I like to maintain the thesis that no one can love God truly and well, if he be not a mystic. In order to know God, man must be in living touch with God.” He goes

over the points of the Christian mystics' teaching and thinks them "profoundly right." The life of God, the life of Christ in the soul of Tyrrell was his real personal religion.

Till the last, he found that mystic life best nurtured in the church of Rome. But within that church he always distinguished between its *official hierarchy* with its scholastic dogmatics and the religious consciousness of the whole church of the faithful, and rested his hopes largely in the laity both learned and unlearned.

"The kingdom of God was once at Jerusalem, then at Rome, but now is afloat, seeking a new, but not, perhaps, final embodiment. Meanwhile each may do the best by sticking to his special church and furthering things as best he can."

"Our Bishops are fighting over papering their attic, while the basement is in flames." "I often thank God that I was not born and bred a Roman catholic, and therefore know experimentally, that the substance and most vital truth of religion does not stand or fall with the Roman church. Science will assert its claims as long as man has a brain. Religion will reassert itself as long as he has a heart."

"Christ was not vulgar in His poverty and simplicity; in the robes of Cæsar He would have been vulgar. If Christ, or even Peter, came to earth to govern the church to-day, do you believe for one moment that they would assume the Byzantine pomp of the Vatican, or claim temporal power." "Every day I feel more of a Catholic (not Roman) and more of a Quaker than ever." "The antinomy I wrestle with is that institutionalism or externalism is at once essential and fatal to religion." "I would sooner see Catholicism Protestantized than dechristianized; I would sooner see the world dechristianized than to be without any religion."

Tyrrell held that both schism and excommunication were equally unchristian. "I hold every schism to have been a sin on the part of those who were driven out and of those who drove them out: that the English Church is a schism for which Rome was nine-tenths and England one-tenth responsible."

Against official Rome, the hierarchy with its vested interests, Tyrrell's opposition continually grew. It was the non-religious side of the church. He thought ultramontaniam doomed. "Nothing can save it, thank God. The great anxiety is whether the new Catholicism can, without a complete rupture, enter into its heritage. Rome cares nothing for religion—only for power: and for religion as a source of power. She feels that Modernism is merely religious; that it would sacrifice every remnant of her political power to the cause of religion."

"If the church is to maintain her monarchic form and live, she must interpret that monarchy after the English democratic type: not after the Russian autocratic one."

I've quoted little about his intellectual struggles and attainments. The latter were the general results of other modernists of the critico-historical school. He was not erudite. At Baron Von Hügel's suggestion, he began the study of German. But he knew nothing directly of the work of the German critical school.

I should have quoted more about his distinction between the official theology and that of the living and deeply religious life of his church. This latter he ever esteemed to be the true catholicity, only needing certain pruning and modernizings, to make it the foremost, almost the final form for the religious life of the present day.

For the last three years of his life, he was a soul-martyr of official Rome. Love him as a martyr we surely must. Through these years he endured persecutions severe, petty, mean, such as zealous churchmen know how to inflict in

modern forms which are morally and spiritually as cruel as the old form of burning at the stake.

As a Protestant reads the account of it he involuntarily cries out—Great God! I would not be cuffed and cussed and shackled by any ecclesiastical officialism as Tyrrell was by Rome, without saying an *anathema* and a *vale* to it. But we love Tyrrell through it all, as we love him through his doubts and misgivings and spiritual struggles, and finally for his answering devotion to Rome, in spite of her persecutions, because he believed her to be *The Church*.

Tyrrell was never formally excommunicated and never formally retracted. He was forbidden the sacraments. He died without receiving the *Viaticum*, though a friend, Abbé Bremond gave him the last absolution. He had previously made his confession to the Prior of Stonington, who also gave him the sacrament of extreme unction.

The Bishop of the diocese refused the departed saint catholic funeral services and burial in a catholic cemetery. "No catholic burial, unless retraction attested by a priest in writing," was the Bishop's refusal. It is pitifully sad—all that his devoted friends tried to do for his remains, what they knew he would have desired. They gave him such parts as they could of the catholic funeral services and committed his remains to their final resting place in a non-catholic cemetery. Abbé Bremond made the address. In it he said: "Catholic burial has been refused him by our own ecclesiastical authorities, and we will make no comment on this decision, accepting it in silence, as he would have told us to do. We wish for nothing that would suggest a schismatic or sectarian attitude, such as he abhorred. But we cannot let him be borne to the grave without prayers. And I, as his old and intimate friend, will say the last catholic prayers over his body, and will bless the grave (*i.e.*, sprinkle holy water upon it) in the



parish cemetery (*i.e.*, of the Church of England) wherein he is to lie." That was on July 21st, 1909.

On January 1st of the same year, Father Tyrrell had written the following: "If I decline the ministrations of a Roman catholic priest at my death-bed (which he did not) it is solely because I wish to give no basis for the rumor that I made any sort of retraction of those catholic principles, which I have defended against the Vatican heresies. If a stone is put over me, let it state that I was a catholic priest, and bear the usual emblemic Chalice and Host."

Surely tear-compelling obsequies they were over the remains of this devout modern Christian mystic and loyal member of his un-motherly church. God bless the saint, for his modernistic work for the revivifying of her motherly instincts. The inscription on the stone bears the Chalice and the Host and the following words: "Of your charity, pray for the soul of George Tyrrell, catholic priest, who died July 15th, 1909, aged 48 years. Fortified by the rites of the church. R. I. P."

Surely a pious pilgrimage to that spot is due from all modernists of all churches. Among those who gathered about his death-bed and his grave, was his devoted friend and admirer Baron Von Hügel. Upon him rests the mantle of the modern Roman catholic mystics, free from most of their controversial and critical elements.

We would fain write at length of this living and inspiring modernist and catholic mystic who is still in the Roman catholic church. But rather let his works be read: "The Mystical Element of Religion, as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa" and "Eternal Life" and now, in a recent volume of "Essays and Addresses." In him we have religion and catholicism at their best. With him and countless other mystics nurtured in, and loyal to, the Roman church; with him as lay Bishop in whom there glows the



motherly instincts of that church, we can well see that she might be a refuge and home for many a Protestant modernist.

Tyrrell had the one-tenth non-conformist conscience and had it strongly. But he also had a nine-tenths Roman catholic conscience. The Protestant part of his conscience commanded reformation, but never the destruction of the Roman catholic church. He would endure excommunication, which he practically suffered, and yet refuse to be other than a member of it. He would submit in silence, with external conformity. He never faced the trial of taking *The Anti-Modernistic Oath*. That came out about the time of his death. We wonder what he would have done about it. Take it, we believe, as some of his fellow priests confessedly did, as a matter of mere lip service and thereafter observe external silence. Still we know that he resolutely refused the conception of the catholic church which identified it as a whole with *Rome's Official hierarchy and her scholastic theology*.

Then we recall his last words: "I am glad that God is to judge me, and not any of his servants."

God rest your soul, dear Father Tyrrell, and give you further and larger service in His kingdom above, where His service is a perfect freedom, such as can be found in no ministering form of any church here below.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CONCLUSION

CHRISTIANITY has passed unscathed through the conflict between science and religion aroused by Darwinism. Its teachers have learned much from the enemy. They have also learned to know better what the essence of religion is. Another form of conflict is going on to-day—the conflict between history and the church. This is the result of what may be termed the critico-historical study of the Bible, the creeds and the church. How did they come about? How did they grow? The traditional conception of all of them was a static one. They were created once for all. The new conception is the dynamic one of continuous creation and that not *ex nihilo*. With the exception of our Sacred Scriptures this creative process is still going on. The historical spirit is regnant in all our estimates of creed and church. Moreover, many definite results have been reached by this critico-historical method of studying the Bible, the creeds and the history of Christianity. These results the man of modern culture is in conscience bound to accept. Can he make a synthesis between the new learning and the old faith? Or must he deny either the new or the old? The modernist does not wish to be an intellectual suicide, nor a religious matricide. He thinks, *he knows*, that he need not be either of these. With the historical spirit he accepts the old along with the new and there is no such conflict as that between religion and the history of the embodiments of religion. In all conscience he feels

bound to follow the light of the new learning and the impulse to learn more. Here are some quotations from the declarations made in the recent *Lambeth Conference*. They urge this intellectual duty upon us in behalf of the vitality of the church as ministrant to meeting the religious needs of educated people of the twentieth century:

"There is much that the fellowship of the church lacks for its completeness of life. The tendency to say 'the old is good' is particularly strong in the church. Religious people are apt to feel the goodness of the old so much that they are slow to prove whether there are yet powers of God on which they have never drawn . . . As a result of this, men and women form fellowships that they may do outside the church what they ought to have had opportunity to do, and to do better, within it" (*Encycl. Letter*, p. 15).

"We are profoundly conscious that the Holy Spirit teaches Christian people by those age-long precedents which we believe to be the outcome of His guidance. But sometimes it becomes our duty, faithfully retaining the lessons of the sacred past, in a very special sense to trust ourselves to His inspiration in that present which is our time of opportunity, in order that He may lead us into whatever fresh truth of thought or of action is in accordance with the will of God. For the Holy Spirit is with us and our generation no whit less than He was with our elder brethren in Christ in the first days of the Gospel" (*Lambeth Report*, p. 95).

"It will not do for us merely to repeat time-honored *formulæ*. We have to state, and to state in terms which are real and convincing to the mind to our time, the fundamental truths of the Christian revelation. And the one and only condition on which these truths become convincing is that the statement of them should be enriched by all knowledge available to-day. As has been said of Origen,

so it must always be said of the guardians of the Faith: 'His faith was catholic and therefore he welcomed every kind of knowledge as tributary to its fulness.' We are able wholeheartedly and without shrinking to welcome research, criticism, scientific investigation: we are ready to accept conclusions to the extent and within the limits which scientific reasoning and methods authorize' (*Ibid.*, p. 118).

Modernists in all the churches are seeking to do their duty in this matter and they intend to continue to do it in the face of all the opposition of traditionalism with its obscurantism. Moreover they are incurably and fundamentally religious. They feel that they have a Gospel message for those who feel alienated from the church by reason of a conflict between the new learning and the old static forms of the embodiment of Christianity. These quotations from the *Lambeth Report* represent the lines on which modernists are working. Modernists maintain that historical criticism and scientific research are God's methods of teaching us much in this age. They apply the critico-historical method in their study of Bible, creed and church. They have no thought of renouncing loyalty to any one of them as seen in the light of twentieth century learning. They reach certain results in their study of these historical authorities in religion, without losing their religion. They know that there are hosts of educated religious people who need the Gospel presented acceptably to them as well as to "the common people" and who are ready to hear it gladly. They feel that the church will be more ministrant to their spiritual life if she will baptize into Christ all science and culture. The more we can learn about God's universe, physical and psychical, the more is our idea of God enlarged and our reverence increased.

The conception of a once-for-all created physical uni-

verse is gone. So too the conception of a fixed, stereotyped, static embodiment of Christianity is bound to go. That myth is often promoted by the ecclesiastical rulers of Christians. We know how the Master found that the "rulers of the Jews" kept men out of the kingdom by a like static conception of it.

If this is an epochal period, we must expect epochal changes. Something new should be borne in the bosom of the old. That new, we might say, is the historical appreciation of the old giving birth to the new.

Perhaps the chief and most vital new conception modernists dwell upon, is that of a restored face of Jesus of the Gospels and His spirit and message and mission. The real and true humanity of the Master is the fundamental one for them. From that they rise inductively and pragmatically to that of his Divinity. Again as to the Holy Scriptures, they find a book of records of God's word coming to men of many ages through their experiences in life. The Bible is a life-giving book, an inspiring book, but no longer a book of proof texts. The old creeds are historical monuments. They are to be interpreted in the historical spirit. We must esteem them in their spirit rather than in their letter. As to polity, there is none that is to be accepted as a matter of more than relatively *jus divinum*. The ideal is a democratic form. Here the equally *jure divino* form of the state has led the way, except at the Reformation. Here the state has as yet scarcely caught up with the church.

As to cult, the pragmatic test must be applied. Are the conventional forms and ceremonies ministrant to the devout life? They are not to be changed lightly. The religious spirit is naturally conservative and clings best to sacrosanct forms.

But in all forms of the embodiment of Christianity the modernist will himself hold to the spirit rather than to



the letter and endeavor to help others to do the same. Grateful for the letter that helps preserve and promote the spirit he cannot be its literal slave. Grateful for its needed function, he knows that it is the kernel that contains the life. Proud possessor of an old castle, he will live best as a modernist, the heir of all the Christian ages, while the slave of none. He will go back to Jesus of the Gospels, take him as Lord and Master, and then forward with Jesus in work for His kingdom, primarily on earth. He will learn much how He was Lord and Master to men of other ages; follow the protean Christ that won their hearts' devotion and yet have the fresh vision of His ineffable face that to-day wins our hearts and our loyalty to Him and His Kingdom on earth.

Modernism—its spirit and its methods—is in all the churches. Rome has silenced it in her fold. What will the Protestant Church do about the movement? The Church of England will not follow the example of Rome. What will the Protestant Churches of America do? Where the traditional and conventional forms are esteemed as the *ne plus ultra* of a static institution, by the rulers of Christians, there will be modern forms of persecution. Bitter words will be uttered by members of both parties in their polemical controversies. The regnant spirit of the Master will be dethroned by that of the enemy of that spirit. Can we not find a better way of reconciliation? Will not the leaders of both parties meet together as Christian brethren, and in the spirit of their common Master have a frank conference on the points of their disagreement? Otherwise it will be an unchristian fight to the finish for a party victory. I deprecate all the evils of such a fight. I want to see every form of the church kept comprehensive of the many dialects in which the Holy Spirit speaks through many men of variant psychological temperaments and of variant world-views.

Some of us have a medieval interpretation of Christ and His church. Some hold the Reformation view. Others see it all best under the interpretation that they are in conscience bound to give from their modern world-view. All are devoted to the common Master. Let there be a *concordat* between them. Let them try to dwell together in Christian fellowship even as they dwell together in social and political fellowship. There is one God and Father of us all; one divine Master and Saviour of us all, and one Holy Spirit ever striving for the unity of us all. In the name and the spirit of the Master let us try to cast out the devil of mere partisan contention. No party is the whole. No partisan victory can be a catholic one.

All this concerns those within the church. But what will the church say to the many wistful ones outside the church; to the many people living under the modern world-view, whose conceptions, even in religion, cannot possibly be those of other ages? I can readily imagine a cultivated modernist, desiring to become a member of the church, arguing against the obsolete forms in which it presents the eternal protean Christ. He is well versed in the knowledge of the first-century Jewish conceptions and can appreciate the way the early Christian Jews preached the Gospel to their fellow Jews. St. Matthew, and St. Mark who voiced the way St. Peter preached it, did not speak in an obsolete dialect or in a foreign tongue. They showed that Jesus was really the fulfilment of their own ideals. But I am not a Jew and do not need to be argued with as a Jew. Neither am I a Hellenized Jew. St. Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews presented Jesus so as to meet the needs of the Hellenistic Jews. Neither am I a Greek, and greatly as I esteem the way the Gospel was presented to the Greeks, highly as I think of the Christological controversies through which the Greek thought fought its way to its ultimatum in the Nicene

creed, I can only with difficulty follow their way of presenting the Gospel, for I am not a Greek. Neither am I a Roman and highly as I esteem the work accomplished by a Romanized form of the Gospel, I cannot accept it as authoritative, for I am not a Roman. My whole world-view is as different from that of the Romans as it was from that of the Greeks or the Jews. Neither is my world-view like that of the mighty men of Reformation times. If you present the eternal protean Christ in the setting of any of these past world-views and demand my acceptance of Him in the form there given as authoritative and final, then I do not see my way clear to enter the church. I would like to see Jesus robed in conceptions of the modern world-view. I should like to go straight back to Jesus of the Gospels and see Him with mine own eyes, as the early Christians did. What can the Church reply to such a frank statement of a modernist so as to enable him or rather them, the very many to-day who are like him, to enter the church? If he believes in progress, he may be brought to see the various stages of this progress of historical Christianity and to esteem them *as stages*. If he believes in institutions he may be brought to feel that a modernist should be the heir of all the stages of this progress. But he cannot be brought to feel that he is the slave of any one of them. Bid him then to accept his Christian heritage as does the modern inheritor of an old castle with its various adaptations to the ages through which it has stood and grown. But do not forbid him to make any modern improvements. Do not demand that in theology he house himself in the chambers built in medieval or Reformation times. Enough if he can see how Jesus was vitally presented in those garbs to men of those times. Demand no literal acceptance of their forms as final. With the historical spirit he would not be iconoclastic, but rather appreciative of the work of the spirit in

and through them. Then allow him freedom to use the results of all modern historical studies of the old church, the old castle. Allow him to use all the certain results of modern Biblical criticism in getting a fresh view of Jesus of the Gospels. He is a truth seeker and a truth lover. Encourage further studies rather than frown upon him in his efforts to get back to Jesus and see Him with modern eyes. Seeing Him thus he will love and adore Him more. He is asking nothing more than the Jews asked of his early disciples. In some such way, I believe, many who are outside the church and that unwillingly, might be brought into her fold and greatly aid in making her a more living church because more ministrant to the eternal religious need, as felt by men of modern culture. "Sir! we would see Jesus!" That is what they are saying in their hearts. Why cannot they be allowed to see Him as best they can through their own modern eyes?





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